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ARRIA.—p. 13.

THE



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HEROINE OF A WEEK :


Conversations for the Teacher and the Taught.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

PHILADELPHIA :
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,
No. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.
NEW YORK, No. 147 Nassau Street.....BOSTON, No. 9 Cornhill.
LOUISVILLE, No. 103 Fourth Street.

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WASHINGTON

The American Sunday-school Union having lately published a volume illustrating the quality of moral heroism by the history of many distinguished men, —it is thought that a volume suited to explain and enforce the same principle, in reference to the more retired and secluded, but not less honourable sphere of females, might prove acceptable and useful.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.....	7
ARRIA.....	13
PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT.....	28
ELEANOR OF CASTILE.....	47
QUINTILIA.....	65
HORTENSIA.....	82
PANTHEA	104
SUNDAY.....	124

INTRODUCTION.

There is one sure way of giving freshness and importance to the most common-place maxims,—that of reflecting on them in direct reference to our own state and conduct, to our own past and future being.

To restore a common-place truth to its *uncommon* lustre, you need only translate it into action; but to do this you must have *reflected* on its truth.—COLERIDGE'S AIDS TO REFLECTION.

IN applying these aphorisms to the following conversations, their *objective* meaning has been slightly altered. The aim of the writer has been to draw practical lessons from the actions of the “heroic dead,” and by “reflecting on them in direct reference to our own state and conduct,” to give them “a freshness and importance” lost, perhaps, by those frequent repetitions which are so injurious to the truth, when unconnected with any exercise of the intellectual faculties. Nor is it owing to frequent repetition alone, that the record of such actions fails to produce any practical effects on the student of history. They appear to belong

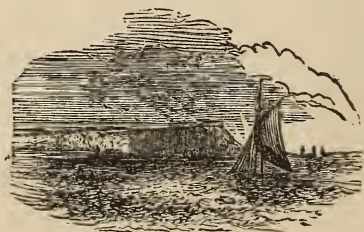
to positions and periods of society so entirely unlike our own, that they are seldom contemplated as even possible examples for the details of the uniform and unromantic life in our times. For the moral nature of man, however, there is no difference of time or place. The principles which it ought to cherish, the discipline which it requires, the temptations to which it is exposed, always maintain an unchangeable sameness. The external form of the duty or the temptation may vary with the position, but the mind which actuates the performance of the one, and struggles against the other, has ever the same course to run, the same process to undergo; if it be indeed fulfilling its destiny, and becoming disciplined by earthly trial, for a heavenly house. If the attempt here made be at all successful, it will suggest to the instructors of youth the advantage and importance of making the study of history a means of moral culture. Nothing can be more insignificant than mere facts, unless they are viewed in the light of comprehensive truths, and those truths rise in value in proportion to the closeness of their connection with our moral being. That knowledge is worse than useless which does not lead to wisdom, for it may delude the possessor into mistaking the means for

the end, and resting in the persuasion, that the toilsome journey is over, when the first step has scarcely been accomplished. If history be "philosophy teaching by example," its lessons ought to be applicable to our daily practice ; for that alone is true philosophy which leads to usefulness, self-denial, and attentiveness to please in the small details of every-day life. Great events occur but seldom, nor is it on them that the formation of character or the happiness of life depends. No ; it is on the daily practice of self-control, self-denial, self-sacrificing consideration for others, and active exertion for their good. In the exercise of such qualities by each member of a social circle, the happiness of the whole is secured at the same time that the individual character is disciplined. These duties cannot be too early cultivated, or too strongly enforced ; nor should any collateral aid be neglected, which may serve as a help in the difficult task. Though "the word of God is *the* lamp unto our feet, and *the* light unto our path," there is not, therefore, any reason for rejecting any lesser assistance, which earthly example or earthly counsel can afford. Even the histories of heathen excellence may be made profitable to those who aim at Christian "perfection." The words of the poet—

“What seemed an idol hymn now breathes of Thee,
Tuned by faith’s ear to love’s celestial melody,”

may be applied as justly to the tales of Greek and Roman heroism, as to the beauties of their literature. Would it not be desirable that the child who learns these stories in the school-room, should be taught to consider them not merely as a charge committed to her memory, but as a seed implanted in her moral nature ; a seed which ought to bear the fruit of still loftier practice, in proportion as the light granted to her is clearer, and the path of duty more distinctly pointed out ?

Such is the nature of the instruction attempted in the following conversations. They have not been written in vain if they can serve the purpose of suggesting to others, the practicability of working out a plan which has been here indistinctly sketched and imperfectly executed.



THE
HEROINE OF A WEEK.

CONVERSATION I.

MONDAY.

ARRIA.

CECINNA PÆTUS was one of those unfortunate men who joined with Camillus against the Emperor, and who, when his associate was slain by the army, had endeavoured to escape into Dalmatia. He was there apprehended, however, and put on board a ship in order to be conveyed to Rome. Arria, who had been long the partner of his affection and misfortunes, entreated his keepers to be taken in the same vessel as her husband. Her fidelity, however, did not prevail. She therefore hired a fisherman's bark, and thus kept company with the ship in which her husband was conveyed

throughout the voyage. When Pætus was condemned to die, and the orders were that he should put an end to his own life, Arria in vain used every effort to inspire him with resolution. At length, finding him continue timid and wavering, she took the poniard, and stabbing herself in his presence, presented it to him, saying, "It gives me no pain, my Pætus."

Grace. Oh! Cecilia, I should so much like to be a heroine.

Cecilia. Well, Grace, I shall answer you with that sentence which pleased you so much when Henry quoted it this morning: "To will is to have the power."

Grace. But, Cecilia, you know there can be no heroines, now, there is no war, and no wounds, and no prisoners. Nothing that I could do now will ever be told in history and make your eyes fill with tears, my own Cecilia, as they did when I was reading the story of Arria to you this morning.

Cecilia. That story excited my feelings from its association with a fact of every-day life, which had been told me just before. Beautiful and touching as the story of Arria was, all my tearful sentiment about it had been exhausted years ago, but the principles which led to that

action are still bearing precious fruit in the world around us. The good woman's heart is still the same: the true heroine, Grace, may be found in the lowly cottage as well as in the palaces of nobles; amidst the refinements and courtesies of modern life, as amidst the startling excitements and strange vicissitudes of the olden time. It is true, her sacrifices may never be recorded, may not even be noticed, but the true heroine, Grace, thinks not of, hopes not for, the praises of historians or of readers; she does not sacrifice self in the hope of being admired for the sacrifice; so far from that, she wishes to conceal her real feelings, she wishes no one to discover that her action is unpleasant to herself, for in this case the person to whom she is sacrificing her own interest would not be able fully to enjoy the fruits of her self-denial. Remember, Grace, that it was the words of Arria, "It gives me no pain, my Pætus," which made her act a really noble part; which made it not only in part, but entirely, the act of a heroine. And now, Grace, tell me what you mean by a heroine?

Grace. Oh! Cecilia, I know quite well, but I can't explain exactly what I mean.

Cecilia. When people know *quite* well, Grace, they generally can explain exactly what they

mean. I am as anxious as you yourself can be, that you should be a heroine; so let us, to begin well, ascertain the real signification of the word. No one can make use of suitable means for the attainment of an object, until the object itself stands clearly and distinctly before them. The explanation of the word heroine in the common dictionaries, is a woman of a brave or heroic spirit; but if you will think over the answers which Henry read us yesterday from the account of the examination of the deaf-and dumb-pupils, you will find a definition which will suit our purpose much better.

Grace. Yes, Cecilia, I remember the answer was, "Arms and soldiers make a conqueror, but courage of heart a hero!"

Cecilia. This definition is even more applicable to the word heroine, than to that of hero; for physical courage, which is here omitted, is essential to the heroic man.

Grace. What do you mean, exactly, by physical courage?

Cecilia. That courage which depends on the body, on the manner in which the body was originally formed by the hand of the Creator, or on training, and sometimes on the state of the bodily health. Mere physical courage, however,—though without it no man can be a

hero,—is equally shared by almost all the common soldiers of vast armies, and is enjoyed by many animals as a mere instinct. That which distinguishes the hero and the heroine is therefore courage of heart—courage of mind. And this often supplies the place of physical courage, or rather creates it, as we see in the case of women with strong minds, who, when forced by circumstances into situations demanding the exercise of physical courage as well as courage of heart, lose the very memory of their weakness, or rather perhaps triumph over it. Of this Arria gives us a striking example.

Grace. And Joan of Arc, Cecilia, and Margaret of Sweden, the “Semiramis of the north,” of whose wonderful beauty and extraordinary valour, we were reading an account yesterday evening—

Cecilia. Yes, these women were striking instances of great physical courage; and there are many others whom we could name, equally distinguished in their actions, if not in their position. The strong will, Grace, can almost trample on impossibilities, and it should be our constant endeavour to strengthen our will in the prosecution of right, and by its power to keep in subjection all the inferior parts of our nature.

Grace. How do you mean, dear Cecilia?

Cecilia. I can easily give you an example,—one relating to yourself too. It does not indeed sound grand in company with Arria; but the circumstance being so trifling a one, makes it more useful as an illustration of my meaning, for great things are not happening every day, and yet every hour brings with it events which tend to form the character, nay, which *do* form it, for good or for evil. Do you remember having a headache yesterday evening, Grace?

Grace. Very well indeed, Cecilia.

Cecilia. And that you said it was caused by want of exercise? You did not like the headache, Grace; that was a present evil; and I dare say if the rain had stopped, and you could have taken a walk at the time you were suffering from it, you would have conquered your indolence, and kept your resolution of walking every day; however, when this morning came, the headache was gone, and you refused to go out to walk. Did you not, Grace?

Grace. Yes, I did; but really, Cecilia, I think this was too trifling an action to be worth talking of. Besides, I have no headache this evening. I never was better than I am now.

Cecilia. Do you then think that your being

free from headache to-day, justifies you for breaking your resolution yesterday? No, Grace, I am sure you cannot deceive yourself thus. Besides, the point in question is not whether the resolution was a good one to make,—nor whether the headache was caused by want of exercise; but whether the will is weakened by breaking the resolutions we have formed. I have no doubt whatever, that if you had kept that resolution yesterday it would have been easier still for you to have kept a more difficult one to-day. This is the manner in which characters are formed and disciplined into excellence. The true heroine, Grace, watches over herself during the smallest occurrences of every-day life, and by exercising self-denial in them, by strengthening her will in them, she is made ready to do great things when the occasion offers. If you will take my advice, Grace, you will make very few resolutions; but when once they are made, let them be strictly adhered to, not so much on account of the goodness of the resolution, as for the sake of the effect to be produced on your character by steady perseverance in it. No one could ever be a heroine who could not do what she intended to do, when the action depended entirely on her own will. If I had

said to you on Saturday, "Grace, you will not be able to resist the temptation of sitting over the fire with a pleasant book in your hand, instead of going out into the cold, frosty air," would you not have been almost angry?—You would have thought that I despised you as a foolish girl, without even courage of heart enough to resist the mere temporary feelings of cold and discomfort. And you know, Grace, your resolution was not broken before the hour of trial arrived, because it was a foolish resolution; for I saw you hesitate while the rest of the party were deciding what they should do, and when you found that two or three were remaining at home, you forgot your headache, because that was past, and you broke—you did not forget—your resolution.

Grace. Oh! Cecilia, how foolish you must have thought me!

Cecilia. Not more foolish than many other people. From much study and experience of the human character, I see that the same natural impulse to self-indulgence to which you suffered your reasonable will to bow, is too generally allowed to usurp the place of any fixed principle of action. Self-indulgence presents a strong motive ever at hand to struggle against, and too often able to conquer even an

enlightened will. It was a conquest of this nature, of the flesh over the spirit, which first brought sin and death into the world. When you are tempted to the smallest indulgence of the body which may impair your freedom of moral action, (and any injury to your health may have that effect,) remember that Eve's temptation was to an act of self-indulgence involving disobedience to the Divine command, and endeavour to avoid even an approach to her sin.

Grace. But, Cecilia, I was not at all certain that it was want of exercise that had given me the headache, or that the same cause would give it to me again.

Cecilia. It was that very uncertainty which gave you an opportunity to exercise control over your will. There are very few human actions of which one can say with certainty, that evil results will follow. Besides, if we are in the habit of yielding to our wishes a control over our will, they will influence us to believe against probability—probability being all the time almost always the only evidence we have given us to act upon. We ought always to examine thoroughly, and to suspect any argument in favour of that which we wish to do. It is safer to perform an action simply because

we like it (which in itself is a reason, and a very good one, when there is no sacrifice of duty involved) than to allow our judgment to acquire the habit of trying "to make the wrong appear the better reason."

But to return to your broken resolution, Grace. Though the result of the headache was nothing more than a probability, there was one certainty in the case, and that was the opportunity that it afforded you of exercising control over your will. Your taking a walk, even if it had not prevented your headache, could not have done you any harm, while breaking your resolution certainly did.

However, there was a more serious instance of your irresolution which occurred last week, and which I had forgotten when I began to speak of your headache and the walk. You wished to get a frock for Susan Moore, that she might look as nice as the other girls at church, and you resolved to lay out no more money until you went to town to buy the frock. In the mean time, however, you saw some beautiful lace; a fortunate contingency occurred to your imagination, that your aunt Herbert would perhaps buy the frock for Susan when she saw how much she wanted it. Your wishes converted this vague hope into an argu-

ment in favour of the lace. Your will yielded, your resolution was broken, and poor Susan must go to church to-morrow in her old gown!

Grace. Well, Cecilia, to you I think I may say, that it was very cruel in aunt Herbert, to refuse to lend me the money which I shall have in a few days.

Cecilia. No, Grace. Your aunt taught you a most useful lesson. She would probably have given you the money if you had consulted her beforehand, and if you had broken no resolution; but when she found that you chose the certainty of your own self-indulgence and left poor Susan to a chance, I think she was right in inflicting a punishment which your good-nature makes you feel to be a very severe one.

Grace. But why should poor Susan have suffered? Why did not my aunt give her the dress herself?

Cecilia. That would not have been any punishment to *you*. If you had seen poor Susan nicely dressed, with her soft, mild face looking happy and grateful, you would have been quite contented; you would have been encouraged the next time to trust to some happy chance to extricate you from difficulties incurred by sel-

fishness and irresolution. Those tears are bitter, Grace, but they may (I trust they will) save you from shedding much more bitter ones hereafter, when selfish irresolution or selfish carelessness, if still indulged in, might deprive you of the power of bestowing benefits on those you love, or even of fulfilling your duties towards those who have stronger claims on you than poor Susan.

Grace. Still, Cecilia, I cannot bear you should consider me so very thoughtless,—so very selfish. Mary Anne told me that my dress could not be worn without that lace.

Cecilia. Perhaps Mary Anne was right, but this is not at all the point in question. I do not attempt to draw lines for the details of other people's conduct in matters of decoration. It is not the propriety or the necessity of a lace-trimming that I object to, nor is it for its extravagance that I blame you, but for breaking a good and unselfish resolution, which had been deliberately formed, and to which you ought to have strictly adhered.

Grace. Then you would have preferred my not having formed any plan of being of use to Susan !

Cecilia. For the sake of your own strength of character I should say, Yes. There is no

use to others in the mere feeling of the most benevolent kind towards them, if our will is not strong enough to insure our being able to act upon it. And to ourselves there is the danger of supposing that we are kind-hearted and compassionate, in merely yielding to a natural instinct while the object of pity is before our eyes, though we have not resolution enough to execute a kind purpose the moment it begins to involve any sacrifice of selfish gratification. You can never be an Arria, Grace. No one to whom the knowledge of the true God has been vouchsafed could commit any but an act of deadly sin in shortening, even for a moment, his own life, or by the faintest suggestion encouraging another to do it. Every additional moment of life produces some effect on the character, for good or for evil, which will be felt throughout eternity. Therefore to shorten any temporal sufferings, however fearful, or under whatever circumstances, would be to take upon one's self the responsibility of the state of a soul throughout eternity, and would show that we had no faith in the overruling providence of God. But Arria had never heard of the God of the Christian. She could exercise no faith in that unslumbering care which allows not even a sparrow to fall unnoticed to the

ground. She knew not of the seal of hope and safety set to our obedience by the words, "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." The Christian heroine ought to act for the next world with the same wisdom, courage and decision, that Arria manifested for this. The honour of her husband was to the heathen woman the most precious thing in either world. Considering her life at her own disposal, she willingly sacrificed it to what she considered a more precious good. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" were words that had never sounded in her ears. And we are not blessed merely by having heard these words, but in acting upon them. Let us then ask ourselves, what do we sacrifice for the attainment of a greater good than the heathen Arria ever heard of? What self-denial are we exercising, as the means, prescribed by our Saviour himself, for acquiring a fitness for that glorious home, of which the heathen woman had no hope? On this important question there cannot be too strict self-examination. With respect to our conduct towards our neighbour, we ought diligently to cherish the feeling which dictated those never-to-be-forgotten words, "It is not painful, Pætus." It is

a feeling which ought to be the foundation of every woman's character, the spring of each of her daily actions. To sacrifice your own will, your own taste, your own interests to those of others, is only half the beauty of Arria's action. It is the concealment of such sacrifices: it is the preventing even the suspicion of them, by silence and patient smiles, that is really a repetition of Arria's action. Grace, when you go to your room, look strictly into your own heart, to see whether in any instance, you have given up your own wishes during the course of even this one day; and still further, whether the sorrowful look, or the discontented word, showed how painful was the effort you were making? It is only when our will

“Yields undiscerned by all but God,”

that we can be sure the sacrifice is made from the simple motive of obedience to his will, and with a grateful love to the Saviour.



CONVERSATION II.

TUESDAY.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT.

WHILE Edward III. was engaged in the siege of Calais, David Bruce, king of Scotland, entered Northumberland at the head of more than fifty thousand men, and carried his ravages and devastations to the gates of Durham. But Queen Philippa, assembling a body of little more than twelve thousand men, which she intrusted to the command of Lord Percy, ventured to approach him at Neville's Cross, near that city, and riding through the ranks of her army, exhorted every man to do his duty; nor could she be persuaded to leave the field till the armies were on the point of engaging. Never did the Scotch receive a more fatal blow



PHILIPPA.—p. 28.

than then. They were broken and chased off the field. Fifteen thousand of them were slain, and the king himself was taken prisoner. Philippa, having secured her royal prisoner in the Tower, crossed the sea at Dover, and was received in the English camp before Calais with all the triumph due to her rank, her merit and her success. John of Vienne, the governor of Calais, now saw the necessity of surrendering his fortress, which was reduced to the last extremity by famine and the fatigue of the inhabitants. Edward with much difficulty was persuaded to mitigate the rigour of the conditions demanded. He only insisted that six of the most considerable citizens should be sent to him to be disposed of as he thought proper ; and that they should come to his camp carrying the keys of the city in their hands, bareheaded and barefooted, with ropes about their necks. And on these conditions he promised to spare the lives of all the remainder. When this intelligence was conveyed to Calais, it struck the inhabitants with new consternation : they found themselves incapable of coming to any resolution in so cruel and distressful a situation. At last one of the principal inhabitants, Eustace de St. Pierre, stepped forth, and declared himself willing to encounter death for the

safety of his friends and companions. Another, animated by his example, made a like generous offer; a third and a fourth presented themselves to the same fate, and the whole number was soon completed. These six heroic burghesses appeared before Edward in the guise of malefactors, laid at his feet the keys of their city, and were ordered to be led to execution. It is surprising that so generous a prince should ever have entertained such a barbarous purpose against such men, and still more, that he should seriously persist in the resolution of executing it. But the entreaties of his queen saved his memory from that infamy. She threw herself on her knees before him, and with tears in her eyes begged the lives of these citizens. Having obtained her request, she carried them into her tent, ordered a repast to be set before them, and after making them a present of money and clothes, dismissed them in safety.

Grace. Well, Cecilia, until I tried yesterday to do the smallest thing like Arria, I never knew how great she really was.

Cecilia. I believe you, Grace. It is only when we attempt to carry out the principles of such actions into the details of our own life,

that we fully understand how admirable they are. Nothing that is not really great and good can be remembered approvingly through the lapse of centuries, and bear the test of public opinion during every age.

Grace. Still, Cecilia, that cannot be quite true, for, you know, people still admire Alexander, though he killed his friend, and died of drinking.

Cecilia. But it is not his vices that are admired, Grace; it is his strong will, his heroic determination, which is, in itself, noble, and which only needs a change of direction to constitute a hero for eternity. No one can be a great hero, even a great wicked hero, without keeping one object steadily in view, and exercising self-denial in giving up every thing which interferes with the attainment of that object. To be entirely great, the object in view must be a noble one; but even when that is not the case, we are compelled to feel a sort of admiration for the person who will steadily, and in spite of powerful opposition, make use of suitable means for the attainment of any end. You laughed, Grace, when Mr. B. said this morning he should have a high respect for any one, who would persevere in the simple act of putting a pin into a pincushion every day throughout the year. But a little re-

flection would have shown you, that the very same principle of action which he admired in the trifling act of putting a pin into a pin-cushion, leads to the conquest of kingdoms among heroes, to the conquest of all the difficulties of science among scholars, and through divine grace to the conquest of the world, the flesh and the devil, by true christians. There can be no perseverance in any thing, be it great or small, without a strong will, and he or she who possesses a strong will must conquer in the end.

The wood of the oak which is exposed to storms, is always stronger and more serviceable than that which is protected by the shade of other trees. It is in the same manner that surrounding difficulties strengthen the will, and enable it gradually to acquire force sufficient to bear down all opposition. The hero, or the heroine, (and this, Grace, is one of their strong distinctive marks,) instead of being disheartened by failure, learns from it a lesson of future strength. The Romans were taught how to conquer Pyrrhus by Pyrrhus himself,—by his victories over them. The key to their future greatness is contained in this beautiful passage of their early history: their strong will turned the disasters, which would have

destroyed other States, into instruments of double conquest, first over their own natural despondency, and then over the power of the enemy.

Grace. You mean this for an encouragement to me, Cecilia. You wish thus to reconcile me to the difficulties which surround me.

Cecilia. Which surround every human being, Grace. We are placed in this world for the purpose of continual conflict, as the only means of attaining to excellence. A cross and not a crown is appointed to us here. If our conflict were to come to an end, the discipline would end too, and so would the improvement. In the words of a holy man of our own day, our safety is to feel the stretch and energy of a continual strife. Let us look once again on the Romans, Grace. What became of them when they were the conquerors of the world, and had no more enemies of any importance to dread?

Grace. Yes, Cecilia; I know that their power and their glory soon passed away, and that they were conquered by nations who were undergoing the same discipline of difficulty and privations which had first made the Romans great. Yes; I understand you perfectly, Cecilia; and do you think that the same causes

will serve to explain the fall of every other nation? I have often heard it remarked, that every nation does fall, when it has been for a short time at the summit of prosperity and power.

Cecilia. Yes. That is an undoubted fact, and, some time or other, we may find it useful to trace this through the vast map of history, connecting it with Daniel's explanation of the great image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and reconciling it, as may be easily done, with the wonderfully-fulfilled prophecy contained therein: but, at present, the subject of female heroism is the one which occupies our attention, and the story of Philippa, the wife of the third Edward of England, has provided us with the materials for this day's conversation. Let us endeavour to find out, Grace, what practical lessons for our tranquil daily life can be drawn from the story of this queen and heroine. You see that she did not actually engage in battle herself, though doubtless, if such a conquest over woman's nature had been necessary, her strong mind would have found it practicable. However, it is very seldom that going out of the sphere in which God has placed us is either useful or necessary. By fulfilling our duties in that position, whatever it may be, we set an

example to others, and excite them to do the same in theirs. This was the conduct of Philippa. The responsibility she incurred by her husband's absence forced her from the ease and splendour of a court into many of the hardships and difficulties of a military life. She performed a woman's duty by exhorting and exciting the men around her to perform theirs.

Grace. She seems, however, to have wished to engage in the battle herself.

Cecilia. Perhaps in the excitement and anxiety of her new responsibilities, she really desired to do so, but her presence during the battle would only have distracted the attention of the troops by fears for her safety. It was much more consistent with the heroism of her character to sacrifice her own feelings to the opinion of those to whose prudence and skill she was committing the fate of her husband's kingdom. The great mind is never greater than in the moment of acknowledging the superiority of others, or submitting to the direction of perhaps a very inferior mind in some peculiar sphere of action in which it may be better qualified to judge.

Grace. Oh! Cecilia, that was so like what Mrs. Morton said of you yesterday, when you paid so much attention to the changes Miss

Barton advised you to make in the accompaniment you were playing, though every one in the room knew you played it much better, and understood it much better, than she could do; and then Miss Lewin, who can scarcely play at all, was so angry at the very same kind of advice being given to her.

Cecilia. It would have lessened the merit of my patience in Mrs. Morton's eyes, if she had understood how comparatively easy it is to bear criticism on points on which one feels one's self strong. With respect to my attending to Miss Barton's advice, and my following it too, I saw in a moment that, though her execution might not be equal to mine, yet that she understood the character of the song, and was well qualified to give advice about it. Miss Lewin did not see, as clearly as I did, how very good the advice was, and was offended that a person, who is not considered a good musician, should presume to suggest an improvement in her playing. If Miss Lewin, who was conscious of not excelling in music, had borne Miss Barton's interference with patience and gentleness, it would have been really amiable in her. But in me, who have wasted so much time in becoming a better musician than many others, and am besides indifferent to being con-

sidered so, there was no merit but that of the mere power of perception that Miss Barton, on this particular point, was better informed than myself. However, I am quite willing to admit that it is both useful and amiable to be willing to accept the advice of those who may, on the whole, be inferior to ourselves.

But to return to Philippa. We see, that when she had exercised with vigour her authority as queen, so long as the occasion required it, she, in the next place, submitted to the opinion and advice of her generals; and retiring from the field before the action began, gave one proof among many others, that those who command well, when in a position of authority, can likewise obey well when the hour arrives for others to exercise authority over them. For the principle of faith, which must be the ground-work of all noble, self-denying obedience, is equally the ground-work of all other excellence of character, and is (with a slight difference of direction) as much the actuating principle of him, who, as a *true* hero, commands armies or empires, as of him who obeys to the extreme of self-denial, the authority which is ordained over him by God. A strong will is required for both and for either, and Philippa's was a strong will.

The victory was won: her husband's kingdom was in safety—his rival was a captive. The news was too good to be entrusted to any lips but her own, and there was now no longer any necessity for her remaining in England, and separated from the king.

Philippa's welcome at the English camp was a grateful and an honourable one; but, though she found her husband in the moment of victory, it was also a moment of darkness and vengeance. It is a difficult thing, Grace, to oppose the determined will of those we love, and run the risk of seeing their affection and tenderness changed into rage and disappointment. But this Philippa dared to do, at a moment when the difficulty was increased by the more than ordinary kindness of Edward.

Grace. Yes; I can understand that, Cecilia, for when Henry was so happy and good-humoured yesterday, I could not bear to run the risk of making him angry with me by telling him it was time to go to his lessons, though I did not mind doing so the day before, when he was in a bad humour.

Cecilia. Well, then, you understand one of Philippa's difficulties. I hope you also followed her example throughout. She had acquired a sort of right to influence her hus-

band's actions, by her noble conduct in England, and if Henry sees that you are very punctual and diligent with respect to your own studies, he will the more readily attend to your advice with respect to his. Advice, I hope, it always is, and not dictation, Grace. Philippa's submission is a lesson to all who are placed in subordinate situations, as to the manner in which they may oppose the will of their superiors. The victorious queen, we are told, threw herself at the feet of her husband to make her request. Her late brilliant success, the admiration and the gratitude of her whole kingdom and of Edward himself, had produced no ill effects on the strong mind of this true heroine. She was willing to brave the anger of the vindictive king, perhaps to turn it all against herself, rather than that the virtuous should perish, and her husband's character be stained with deadly crime. But at the same time, her acknowledgment of inferiority, of obedience, of submission, was as lowly as her courage of heart was great. She was more entirely a heroine at that moment than when riding at the head of armies, and inciting them to victory by her confidence and spirit. And in her humiliation she was successful as well as great. Edward was subdued by her

gentleness and humility, though he might have turned in fury from her arguments.

“Her submissive spirit was to him
Rule and restraint.”

And this is the only rule and restraint which women have need to exercise. But alas! the weaker the mind, the more it shrinks from submission; the more it struggles against an obedience which even instinct teaches to be right and suitable. We see Philippa the queen, the conqueror, kneeling voluntarily before her lord and master, while some peasant's wife, unless she be gifted with a true womanly spirit, will insist on entire dominion. One of the most important, and perhaps the most difficult of all lessons, Grace, is that of prompt obedience, unquestioning submission; it is one which requires continual practice, self-denial, watchfulness, and, more than all, help from above. To you it is a peculiarly difficult one, which makes me still more anxious to impress its importance on your mind.

Grace. Why should you think that it is a peculiarly difficult lesson for me to learn, dear Cecilia? Do I not obey all your wishes, and attend to all your advice, as far as I can?

Cecilia. Yes, dear Grace, I gratefully ac-

knowledge your attention to my wishes, but in this there is scarcely any exercise of the spirit of obedience. You have yourself chosen me for your guide and adviser; therefore in submitting to my authority, you are only obeying yourself at second hand. Besides, I am careful whenever I recommend any action to you, to show some reason which your own mind may examine and approve as a good one. More than all I never assume a tone of authority in speaking to you, having no right to such an assumption, and therefore the rebellious spirit which is strong in almost every heart, remains unexcited in yours. You are not tempted; *therefore* you do not fall into error. But yesterday, Grace, when your aunt Herbert told you to gather roses for your own room out of the mountain-walk, were you as obedient as I allow you are to me, or as you ought to be to her?

Grace. I was not disobedient, Cecilia. I did not gather the roses anywhere.

Cecilia. Of course you did not. You are too old, too little of a child to do exactly the thing you were desired not to do. The only temptation to resist your aunt Herbert's authority, was to act as you did—to give up your roses altogether—instead of obeying simply,

promptly and cheerfully, the directions she had a right to give you.

Grace. Oh! but Cecilia, you do not know how very teasing aunt Herbert had been about those roses, and that it was merely to annoy me, and give me trouble, that she desired me to go to the mountain-walk. The very day before she had told me that the roses in the garden were to be the only roses gathered, as the shade of the trees in the mountain-walk would keep the flowers there longer in blossom, and she wished to keep them as long as possible.

Cecilia. I don't think that alters the case in the least. Your aunt Herbert is now placed in authority over you while your mother is away, and it is your duty, therefore, to obey her in every particular that does not involve serious consequences to your welfare, or the breach of any higher duty. The less you exercise a questioning spirit with respect to your aunt's motives and conduct, the easier you will find it to pay her that implicit obedience which your present situation makes one of your principal duties. And in truth, Grace, when the orders that are given to you appear perfectly reasonable, there is no exercise at all of the spirit of obedience, which is only called

forth in a way useful to the formation of character when we are desired to obey the capricious will, or the unreasonable fancies of those who are in authority over us. Besides, if we acquire the habit of examining the good temper and reasonableness of the directions given to us by those to whom we are bound to submit, we shall cherish, instead of subduing, the natural feeling of dislike to control and contempt for authority. Those who never, in earlier times, learned to obey, and submit to the caprices of others, (an almost certain cure for one's own,) are precisely those who are most capricious and exacting in the exercise of any little authority which may afterwards be committed to them.

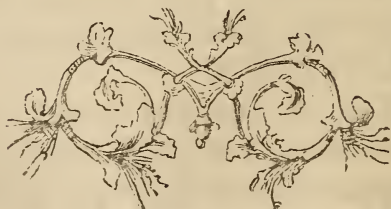
Grace. Well, Cecilia, I will show you that all you have been saying is at least of some present use to me, by putting on my pink frock for dinner, which I certainly should not have done if I had not had this conversation with you.

Cecilia. I am very glad to hear it, Grace. I heard your aunt Herbert expressing a wish that you should wear it.

Grace. Yes, she did, but instead of saying plainly and kindly, "Grace, I wish you would wear your pink frock to-day," she drew a com-

parison between Lucy Heaton and me, which you heard as well as myself. I was very much vexed, and determined not to wear the pink frock again while I stayed here; but now, Cecilia, you have shown me that a great deal of my anger was owing to my dislike to any kind of dictation, and I will try to conquer my spirit of disobedience. I shall not only wear the pink frock, which will be comparatively easy; but more than that, Cecilia, I shall tell aunt Herbert that I have worn it because she said she wished me to do so. Oh! Cecilia, you cannot think how difficult that will be!

Cecilia. Indeed, I can understand that for you it will be very difficult, because it will be a struggle against your strongest feelings,—those of pride and independence. Still I feel that the struggle, however painful, will be a successful one, because I know that against this and all other sinful tempers, you will seek for that assistance from above, without which “our own strength is perfect weakness.”





ELEANOR.—p. 47.

CONVERSATION THIRD.

WEDNESDAY.

ELEANOR OF CASTILE.

AT the close of Henry the Third's reign, his son Edward set out on a crusade to the holy land, meaning to join the King of France at Tunis, but on his arrival there, he found that Louis, who has acquired the surname of saint, had died of the plague. On his death, the French troops returned to Europe, but Edward resolved still to pursue the enterprise with his own little army. He conducted it with great skill and valour, and the Saracens, who found him a very dangerous enemy, employed an assassin to murder him. Edward wrenched the dagger from the man's hand, and killed him in the attempt; not however before he had himself been wounded in the arm with the poisoned weapon. The wound, we are told, might have proved fatal, had not his affectionate wife

Eleanor, who accompanied him to Palestine, prevented the effect of the poison by sucking it from the wound. He set out on his return to Europe soon afterwards. * * * In 1291, Edward had the affliction of losing his queen. She died at Harby, in Nottinghamshire, and Edward accompanied her body from thence to its burial-place at Westminster; and to commemorate her worth and his own grief, he caused a stone cross to be erected at every place where the body stopped on this melancholy journey.

Cecilia. In Philippa of Hainault, we have a beautiful instance of the combination of rare talents with the softest womanly virtues. In Eleanor of Castile, the wife of Edward the First, we see how loveable and how useful gentleness and affection alone may be, even when unaccompanied by any mental superiority. In Eleanor's conduct we may all study the difficult lesson of sacrificing self, either its safety or its interests, a lesson which seems more peculiarly appropriate to woman than to man; though in a certain degree, all are alike called on to follow the steps of our Great Exemplar, "who pleased not himself."

Grace. Do you consider, Cecilia, that Eleanor ran the risk of her own life by sucking the

poison from Edward's wound? I have heard that many poisons, fatal when received into the blood, are perfectly harmless if taken internally.

Cecilia. Yes; of this I have heard milk mentioned as an instance, which, by chemical analysis as well as experience, is known to be the most wholesome species of nourishment, and yet it is said that it becomes fatal to life when infused into the veins. However, Eleanor could not have known the nature of the poison which had been used by her husband's assassin; nor is it in the least probable that the certainty of its fatal effects on herself would have influenced the actions of this faithful and devoted wife. From her general conduct, and not only from this single trait, we have reason to believe that she was in the constant habit of considering herself in a subordinate point of view, and never of any importance except from the power of contributing to the happiness of others. The more experience you have of life, Grace, the more you will be persuaded that the people who are habitually ready for such great actions of self-sacrifice, as this of Eleanor's, disclaim and avoid responsibility and interference in the ordinary course of events, often from a shrinking feeling of deep humility. They move on in a quiet bye-path

of their own, ready to come forward when called upon by the voice of affection or duty, but ordinarily shunning any prominent position, or any course of action more demonstrative than that of unobtrusive cheerfulness.

Grace. I think I know a character in common life very like that which you suppose to have been Eleanor's. I mean Mary Hamilton, the orphan niece of Mrs. Clayton.

Cecilia. I quite agree with you. I have often thought, as I watched her, pursuing "the even tenor of her way," that her character was gradually forming into one of the finest examples of womanly single-mindedness. The total absence of all talent seems even to bestow an additional grace on her character; for she is not only fully aware of her mental inferiority, but confesses it in words and actions with so much gentleness and humility, that one could scarcely wish for her the responsibilities of genius.

Grace. And then she shows, Cecilia, as you have just said of Eleanor, how useful a woman may be without great talents; for I think her brother Charles would be a thousand times more sorry to vex her by doing any thing wrong, than if she had all the talent and the power of convincing his reason that Caroline has.

Cecilia. Yes; I observed that, while I was staying there last week. Charles had put off going to school that he might attend the races; and Mrs. Clayton very foolishly allowed him to do so. He had begged of her, however, to keep his plan a secret until the moment arrived for bidding good-bye, as he knew his sister would highly disapprove of it; and accordingly, the subject was never mentioned until we met at breakfast the day he was going. Caroline was very much displeased, and expressed her regret and objections, with the deep conviction and strong good sense which make every thing she says so impressive. However, the more ingeniously she destroyed all Charles's defences and excuses, the more angry and the more determined he became. At length he left the room, saying that nothing could change his plans; and that as Caroline had no more agreeable conversation for him, she should not see him again until the carriage was ready to take him to the railroad, when he would come in for a moment to bid them good-bye. As soon as he closed the door after him, Mary burst into tears, no longer able to conceal the exceeding distress which she felt; and Caroline, now doubly irritated by her brother's conduct, could not help reproaching her for expressing no

opinion while he was present. "He knew very well what I thought," Mary answered gently; "and what could I have said, dear Caroline, that would have been half so good as what he heard from you? Yet you see that it had only the effect of making him more determined in his purpose. If you could not convince him he was wrong, I am sure nobody else could; but, indeed, not even you can feel it more than I do."

Soon after Caroline and I sat down to our work in the drawing-room, and waited there for the take-leave visit, which the wilful brother had promised. We heard the carriage coming to the door, and a minute after he came in. "But where was Mary?" We could not tell him. He bid us good-bye, coldly and hastily, and as he turned away from us, I heard Mary's light step in the passage: she met him at the door. "Where were you, Mary?" he said; "I thought you would not even come to see me off;" but when he saw the deadly paleness of her face, and the tears which were streaming down her cheeks, he changed his tone of voice even before he had finished the sentence, and Mary told him that she had been in her own room, finishing a piece of work which he had asked her to have ready for him before he left

home, and which she now held in her hand. He looked at her for a moment, and then he said, "Well, Mary, you shall have your wish, though you would not even speak it. I will tell Mrs. Clayton that I have changed my mind, and that I wish to have the carriage an hour later to take me to school. I will not go to the races at all, Mary; and I must see you look happy again, before I go anywhere."

Grace. Was Caroline angry that he had not complied with her wishes, and yet had afterwards yielded to Mary's?

Cecilia. No; Caroline is as noble in character as she is superior in mind. She kissed Mary affectionately, and told her that she had been in the right the whole time, and that she understood how to influence Charles for his good, a thousand times better than she did. While dear little Mary, smiling, and looking happy through the tears which were still flowing, assured her that she knew Charles had been convinced by her arguments in the morning, and was only waiting for an opportunity to confess it.

Grace. And I dare say that was partly true, Cecilia. I do not like to think that Caroline's skill and good sense had no effect on Charles. There would be no use in trying to improve

one's mind, if it does not give one more influence over others, and make them pay more attention to one's opinion.

Cecilia. Of that there can be no doubt, Grace; and it is the certainty of this, which makes the diligent improvement of the mind of so much importance. Of all the talents which God has committed to our charge to be exercised for the good of others, there is not one which entails such heavy responsibility as high mental powers; because, when judiciously employed, they give the most extensive and constraining influence over the minds of men. The outward act may obey the influence of high position, of great wealth; and that, as well as the inward feelings, be often swayed by affection and esteem; but the mighty power of intellect alone establishes an empire to which all must in time bow down. When we compare the changes produced, and in progress, in the mind of our race by a Bacon or a Newton, with any thing that could be effected by the richest subject or the most powerful monarch, we see that the spirit which was breathed into man by God himself, ever preserves an immeasurable superiority over the things of time and sense. My object in this day's conversation with you, is not to depreciate the ad-

vantages of intellect, but to point out the manner in which its place may partly be supplied. It is not solely for one's own personal gratification, Grace, for one's own conscious advancement in the scale of creation, nor even for its ennobling effects on our moral nature, that the mind is to be watchfully and unceasingly improved. The grand object for which the Christian lives, is to "glorify his Father in heaven," and it is only by "good-will towards men," that we can in human sight give "glory to God in the highest."

Grace. Well, I am sure, no one can do more good than Mary Hamilton. She spends her whole time among the poor, and gives them all the money that the other girls I know spend for ribbons and laces.

Cecilia. Mary does indeed employ her single talent to the utmost, and as she desires to glorify her Saviour, whose grace makes her what she is, so her reward will be great in that day when every man shall receive according to that he hath, not according to that he hath not. But though kindness to the poor is the duty of all, it is only a small part of the responsibility which is entailed on us by being members of a social circle. Our words, our looks even, may

be perpetually influencing those around us for good or for ill.

Grace. Yes, Cecilia, I have observed that; for the other evening when Mr. Harman was showing little William the pictures in the large Bible, and answering his questions, he began to speak jestingly of Balaam's ass, and I laughed thoughtlessly at what he said, until I saw you looking grave, and then I remembered what a sin it is to speak lightly of any thing in the Bible. When Mr. Harman observed your looks he too changed his tone, and explained every thing quite properly to William.

Cecilia. I am very glad that my looks alone produced the effect I wished, on Mr. Harman; they were almost involuntary, for as he is so much older than I am, and little William's uncle besides, that I should scarcely have thought it right to express disapprobation of his conduct.

Grace. Do you think he would have been angry, if you had spoken plainly to him?

Cecilia. I am afraid he might have been so, and then I should have done a great deal more harm than good. There are very few cases in which it is safe to overstep the boundary which has been fixed to our duties, by trying to teach those who are our superiors in age or position; and when we have made people angry instead

of improving them, we have not the consolation of knowing that we are suffering in the path of duty. This is not a temptation into which people like Mary Hamilton are liable to fall. In her deep humility she feels that her want of talent frees her from the responsibility of seeking to guide those around her in the right path. She therefore contents herself with setting an example of "all things lovely and of good report," without trying in any other way to convince others of their errors of life and conduct.

"The bad she censures by her life alone,
Blind to their faults, severe upon her own."

"She hath done what she could," is a commendation which Mary amply deserves, and in her case the "what she could" is more than would be supposed by any one who had not watched the almost imperceptible influence of her holy life and sweet simplicity of mind.

Grace. And do you think, Cecilia, that Mary has "courage of heart" enough to be a heroine, to run the same risk as Eleanor did?

Cecilia. With respect to the capability for actions, such as Eleanor's, we shall form the safer judgment by applying the principles in which such actions originate to the commonplace details of every-day life. These are the

real tests of character, for in periods of great excitement and of great risk to those they love, even selfish people will be induced to sacrifice their own feelings and interests. Harriet Howard had made her poor little sister miserable for a whole morning, because she would not give up the story she was reading, to help her to prepare her lesson. Yet when little Sarah fell out of the boat in the evening, we had great difficulty in keeping Harriet from throwing herself out too; though she could have done her no good, and all proper means were already in use to provide for the safety of the child.

Grace. But surely, Cecilia, you must think Harriet Howard a very good-natured, warm-hearted girl?

Cecilia. Yes, Grace, very good-natured, as far as liking to see every one happy, if they are not made so at the expense of some pleasure of her own! How much more useful it would have been to Sarah to have given up the book, and waited for two or three hours without knowing the end of the story, than if she had even gone so far as to drown herself out of love to her! And it would have been useful to herself as well to Sarah; for it would have been an act of self-denial to help Sarah about

her lesson, while she was engrossed and excited by an interesting story. People who will not sacrifice self, who will not make themselves uncomfortable for the sake of the real good of others, can never be what you have called Harriet Howard, really "good-natured." It was the forgetfulness of self, the sacrifice of her own safety to that of another, which made Eleanor's act the act of a heroine, and in our daily, common-place life, there are constant opportunities of acting from the same spirit, and cherishing the same noble habit of mind.

Grace. But one never could get on in any thing if one were to be perpetually obliging others. When Henry brought me his French exercise this morning, I was in the middle of my own German lesson, and I should not have had it ready, if I had stopped to correct his exercise.

Cecilia. Then you did not correct it?

Grace. No, I thought my learning was of as much consequence as his.

Cecilia. Perhaps you said so?

Grace. No, not exactly, but he has been vexed with me ever since.

Cecilia. Then I am afraid, if you did not exactly say to him what you have been saying to me, your looks or your manner must have expressed the same thing.

Grace. But what would you have had me do, Cecilia?

Cecilia. You ought to have felt that his lesson, if not of more, was at least of as much consequence as your own; and that would have made you feel sorrow for not being able to help him. Then you would naturally have expressed what was in your heart, and if he had seen that you were as much annoyed as he was, at your not having time to correct his exercise, I do not think he would have been angry with you—do you think he would?

Grace. Oh! Cecilia, I am afraid you will think I was very ill-natured to Henry. I certainly am sorry now when I think about it, but, at the time, I was vexed at his interrupting me, and still more at his seeming to think that his lesson was of more consequence than mine.

Cecilia. So that you confess your conduct to have been entirely influenced by the low principle of self-interest! If, on the contrary, you were daily and hourly struggling against this principle, you would have formed a habit of feeling sorrow, and nothing but sorrow, at not having it in your power to help those around you. You would have readily expressed regret to Henry for not being able to give up your

occupation to his, as it was a task imposed upon you, and not a mere pleasure.

Grace. Well, Cecilia, I have just thought of a pleasure that I can give up for him, and I will gladly do it, to show him that I am now sorry for his disappointment in the morning. You know that they are all going to walk to the wood, to gather wild flowers for the school-feast this evening. I heard Henry say that he could not be of the party, because it would take him three or four hours to prepare his lesson for to-morrow morning; and my plan is to stay with him while you go to the wood, and help him to study his lessons, which will save him an hour or two of time, and he will then be able to go into the school at the beginning of the feast, for he was fretting lest he should be obliged to be late.

Cecilia. I like your plan very much, Grace, and I am glad to find that you are showing regret for your error, in the only useful way, by a determination to overcome the spirit of selfishness which occasioned it. You will be of great use to Henry this evening, because you are really a well-taught girl, and understand most of the things he is learning. This is the best use one can make of acquirements, to help other people, and by good-

natured and well-timed assistance to gain an influence over them, which may be employed to lead them by degrees into every thing that is good.

It is very clear that we render our attainments in grace and knowledge subservient to the glory of God, when we employ them in making others happy—I mean, happy in the best and highest sense of which our moral and immortal nature is capable. This happiness must always consist in conformity to God's law; and the more impressively our conversation and temper reflect the image of our gracious Redeemer, the more we shall do for him, for ourselves, and for “a world lying in wickedness.”





QUINTILIA.—p. 65.

CONVERSATION IV.

THURSDAY.

QUINTILIA.

AT the time that the last conspiracy against Caligula was ripening for execution, a woman named Quintilia, who was well acquainted with all the particulars of the plot, was cited to appear before the emperor, to confirm an accusation laid against Pompedius, a senator of distinction. The accusation against him was that he had spoken with disrespect of the emperor; but the truth of it was resolutely denied by Quintilia. At the request of the informer, she was put to the torture, without however any further information being obtained from her, for she bore the severest torments of the rack with unshaken constancy. She revealed nothing relating either to the

treasonable words that were supposed to have been spoken, or to the conspiracy which immediately afterwards resulted in the emperor's death. This was the more remarkable, as one of the persons appointed to preside at the torture, was Cherea, the head of the conspirators. When all her limbs were dislocated, she was released and brought to the emperor, who allowed her a gratuity.

Cecilia. Your plan answered very well yesterday, Grace; we had a delightful walk in the woods,—and I feel no reluctance in telling you, because I know you were too well contented with the choice you made, to feel any regret for having missed the walk.

Grace. No, indeed, Cecilia, I do not regret it. Henry had so bad a headache that I don't think he could ever have learned his lessons by himself. But, with my help, he got over them so soon, that we had time to take a short walk in the garden, by which he cured his headache before the school-feast began. It was altogether the pleasantest evening that I have spent for a long time.

Cecilia. I fully believe you, Grace. You must not expect, however, dear child, that all sacrifices can be so easily made, or will be so

gratefully received. You must make up your mind to act from a principle of duty, and to consider your object attained when the duty is fulfilled. In many cases the sacrifices you make for the welfare of others will not be noticed; sometimes they will not be considered in the light of sacrifices, and sometimes they will even be received with ingratitude and unkindness.

Grace. Yes, indeed, Cecilia. I saw Mary Hamilton the other day working for four hours to finish a purse for Charles, when she was scarcely able to move her hand owing to pain in her side; and the moment it was finished he threw it down on the table, saying that it was not at all pretty enough for him, and that she had spent her time for nothing. I thought this so ill-natured in Charles, Cecilia, and I wanted to tell him of Mary's illness, to make him feel more grateful to her; but she called me out of the room, and begged me to say nothing of it to Charles, because he was always uneasy about the pain in her side, and it would fret him to hear that she was suffering from it.

Cecilia. Was not that like a heroine, Grace, and not only in the spirit of self-sacrifice which it manifested, but also in her readiness to

acknowledge the good qualities her brother may possess, at the very time when she was suffering from his thoughtless unkindness? Charles was really ill-natured about that purse, because he knew that Mary had taken a great deal of pains in choosing the colours, and had given up making her own gown, that it might be finished in time for him. However, if we considered the ill-humours of others as opportunities provided for us of conquering our weaknesses and proneness to take offence, we should receive such annoyances as “blessings in disguise.” Still further, we should forget the ill-nature of the person who inflicts such annoyances on us, in the consideration of the beneficial results which are thus produced by them.

Grace. Oh! Cecilia; I wish I could think so: if I could only remember, whenever aunt Herbert teases me, that she is giving me an opportunity of conquering my temper, and exercising the spirit of obedience!

Cecilia. It is with reference to your aunt Herbert that I have chosen the subject for to-day's conversation. I was much grieved, this morning, Grace, at hearing you say to Anna Morton, “Aunt Herbert is never in a good-humour for two days together.”

Grace. I thought you heard me, Cecilia, and I had not quite finished the sentence before I was sorry for what I had said; but, indeed, aunt Herbert had vexed me so much the moment before, that I scarcely knew what I was doing.

Cecilia. Your resolution must have been very weak, Grace, when you allowed your passion to transport you into what you knew was a breach of confidence. Aunt Herbert receives you into her house, supposing that you are her friend, that you will not repeat what passes there, if it be any thing that could injure her; and then you take advantage of her familiarity with you, and her confidence in you, to publish abroad the faults of her character.

Grace. Indeed, Cecilia, I know I was very wrong, for Anna Morton will never forget what I said—perhaps will even repeat it.

Cecilia. Very probably. One never can tell how far the harm of any breach of confidence may extend, but I am sure that it always, in the end, proves a greater injury to the person who has committed the fault than to the person who is betrayed by it. I have known the opening of a letter intended for another person (an act supposed necessary

for the safety of him who opened it) prove the means of hurrying on the very evil he hoped to avoid, besides bringing on him shame and disgrace. It is of great importance, with respect to all actions of this nature, that we should never, even in thought, consider them possible for us to commit. If you had always, when thinking over aunt Herbert's conduct to you, looked upon it as a subject that could not, under any circumstances, be discussed with a stranger, you would not, even when strongly excited, have yielded to the temptation of committing a fault that had never been suffered to rest for a moment in your thoughts.

Grace. But surely, Cecilia, you would not draw any sort of comparison between my action and the importance of the secrets which Quintilia was tempted to reveal, and which would have caused the deaths of so many people.

Cecilia. Neither could I draw any comparison between the temptation of momentary anger, by which you were assailed, and the agony of protracted torture to which she was subjected. "They who will not obey in things easy, will not obey in things difficult." Indeed, the force of the temptation being generally in proportion to the importance of the

action, there is not so much difference as appears at first between the difficulty of one act of obedience and another. "He that is faithful in a little is faithful also in much."

Grace. That is not easy to understand, Cecilia.

Cecilia. Try to prove the truth of my assertion in the surest way, by putting it into action. It was a very slight gratification to you yesterday to give vent to your evil tempers, by telling Anna Morton of aunt Herbert's faults. It did yourself no good, for it could not raise you in Anna's estimation. It did not serve to excuse any of your faults. The temptation was so slight, that you could easily have struggled against, and overcome it.

Grace. Yes; I must acknowledge that, Cecilia.

Cecilia. But if you had had reason to suppose that your aunt Herbert had represented you as an unmanageable, ill-tempered girl to a person whose love and esteem you were anxious to gain, (Caroline Hamilton for instance,) would there not be, in this case, a strong temptation to tell Caroline how unkindly and unjustly aunt Herbert had spoken of her, as that would appear a certain way to prevent her placing any confidence in aunt Herbert's other representations?

Grace. Oh! Cecilia; that would be very wrong indeed.

Cecilia. But the temptation would be a great one, and, in some cases, may prove so strong, that it can only be overcome by a previous *habit* of strict secrecy with respect to any thing that would injure another.

Grace. Yet, Cecilia, you have never blamed me for speaking quite openly to you about aunt Herbert's conduct.

Cecilia. That is quite a different case. I know aunt Herbert as well as you do, therefore you could not alter my opinion of her. You also know very well, that you have the confidence of experience in me, Grace, that nothing you say to me will ever be repeated. On the contrary, by discussing her conduct with those who will not feel bound to any secrecy when you show none, she is exposed to the danger of being generally disliked and feared, and you run the risk yourself of not being trusted or confided in by any one.

Grace. Oh! I know I was wrong, very wrong, Cecilia; but I assure you it is quite a different thing when I am given any secret to keep, and make a promise to keep it.

Cecilia. I am sorry to say, that I do not think so, Grace. You were told a secret, last week.

Henry wished it not to be known that he had ordered a handsome present for his tutor. However, one day, when he was in a particularly good humour with you, he told you the whole story, and you made him a promise of strict secrecy.

Grace. Oh! Cecilia; you do not know how often I was tempted to break that promise; most of all, on Wednesday, when aunt Herbert was vexed with Henry for some foolish reason, and she said that Henry was so selfish about his money, always spending it upon himself.

Cecilia. Still, that could not have been a very strong temptation, because you knew that in two or three days more aunt Herbert would hear of the present he had ordered for Mr. Elton, and would also hear that he had given up going to the Regatta, that he might have enough money to get something that would be very useful.

Grace. But aunt Herbert would not give Henry the least credit for it, when she heard all about it.

Cecilia. And whose fault was that, Grace?

Grace. I know what you mean, Cecilia. I know that it was very imprudent in me to tell aunt Herbert that I had heard of the present a week before, because she was then offended

with Henry for not having consulted her as well as me about it;—for not having trusted the secret to her as well as to me.

Cecilia. It was worse than imprudent, Grace; it was really breaking your promise of secrecy. As soon as a secret is made known to every one, we can no longer be guilty of a breach of secrecy, by revealing what has ceased to be a secret. The only temptation that remains then is to show that we have been more trusted than other people, who think they have an equal right to confidence. This was the temptation to which you yielded, and in this way one may do as much harm to the person who has confided in us, as if we told the secret itself.

Grace. Yes, indeed, I did poor Henry a great deal of harm; and, though he was very good-humoured about it, he told me that he should be afraid for the future to tell me any thing, unless he could tell it to aunt Herbert, also.

Cecilia. So that you see you defeated your own object. You know why it was you told aunt Herbert that Henry had consulted you a week before?

Grace. Yes; I understand what you mean: I wished to show aunt Herbert that I was considered by others a person who could keep

a secret well, though she did not think so, and in the attempt to prove this to her, I prevented my being trusted again,—my deserving confidence. Well, Cecilia, I will, for the future, watch myself closely about secrets, but it now appears to me so difficult, that I do not think I shall wish to hear them as much as I used to do.

Cecilia. A person who is very conscientious about keeping secrets, will never wish much to hear them;—there is so much circumspection required to avoid betraying, either by words or looks, the confidence that has been placed in you. However, there is still another species of secrecy about which I must talk to you before this conversation ends. A species of secrecy of much importance too, for, without it, there can be no comfort or freedom in conversation. I can show you most clearly what I mean, by an illustration,—by an action of your own yesterday, when Clara Dormer and you were making hay with the children, and she was in the extravagant spirits which the least excitement always produces in her, she said to you, “How happy we should always be, Grace, if there were no grown-up people in the world!”

Grace. And you think that I was wrong in telling that to aunt Herbert.

Cecilia. You know how angry it made her. It seemed indeed more unfeeling in Clara to make such an observation than any one else, because, from having no brothers or sisters, she lives entirely with grown-up people, her father and mother, and her two kind aunts.

Grace. But, you know, Clara only meant it as a joke.

Cecilia. I know that very well, and so do you, to whom it was said; but when we repeat things to other people, they are scarcely ever heard by the same *mental* ears as those to which they were first addressed. And therefore it is that the repetition, however literal in words, is not, in point of fact, the same as the original, because it is not understood in the same sense as it was by the person for whom the first speaker intended it. You know that Clara would not have made such an observation as that to aunt Herbert herself.

Grace. She was in such wild spirits that I think she would have said any thing that came into her head to any one.

Cecilia. Well, even if she had said it to aunt Herbert, it would have been seen by the excitement she was in, that her words were a mere joke. Aunt Herbert would have understood that, if she had herself heard Clara say

them ; though you could not convince her that such was the fact, after having once repeated them calmly and deliberately, and allowed her in this way to receive her first impression of them.

Grace. But, dear Cecilia, surely you did not think that I could be so ill-natured as to wish aunt Herbert to suppose that Clara was unfeeling enough to say those words in earnest. Indeed, I should not have repeated them at all if I had thought they could have done her any harm.

Cecilia. No, Grace, I am sure you would not ; but carelessness and thoughtlessness may often do as much harm to those around us, as if our intentions were really bad. There is, besides, something almost dishonest in making a different use of other people's words from that which they intended when they confided them to us. I speak of their being "confided" to us, because even in the most playful and trifling conversation, there is an understood feeling, that you are not speaking for the world in general, but for those particular ears alone, which you are addressing at the time ; ears which you know will understand your words in the sense in which they are spoken ; for the simplest phrase is often susceptible of different interpretations, according to the tone

in which it is uttered, and the nature of the mind that hears it.

“A jest’s prosperity lies in the ear that hears it,
And never in the tongue that makes it.”

We should be careful, therefore, to adapt the words for which others are responsible to an audience which they would themselves have chosen.

Grace. That would be very troublesome, Cecilia.

Cecilia. Life is intended to be troublesome in this sort of way, and there is a double reason for exercising constant watchfulness over every word and action; first of all, because of the strict account we must render for the slightest moral act at the last day; and, secondly, such strict discipline is the only means by which our character can be formed into that of trustworthy and respected members of society.

Grace. But don’t you think aunt Herbert was very ill-natured about Clara, when she said, that she showed by speaking in such a way, that she had not the slightest affection or gratitude for all the kind relations who think of nothing but her happiness?

Cecilia. If all the people around us were perfect beings, there would be no opportunity

afforded us for the exercise of either discretion or patience. It will do us no good, but a great deal of harm, to see other people's failings, unless we make use of our insight into them for the direction of our own conduct. For instance, you have often told me, that aunt Herbert never makes allowances for other people, and affects not to understand jokes. Notwithstanding this, you ran the risk of making her think ill of Clara, by repeating the very kind of joke which would be most likely to annoy her. I have heard you observe yourself, that aunt Herbert feels herself that young people and children are not fond of her, and that she is very much vexed at it.

Grace. Yes, indeed, Cecilia, I know that very well; and you have convinced me that I was very foolish and very thoughtless. I will try to watch myself carefully for the future, and it will be so pleasant to see that people can express all their thoughts before me, they will be so sure of my never repeating any thing in the wrong time or place.

Cecilia. That is a degree of confidence and trust that can only be acquired by long habits of perseverance in thoughtful discretion. This must not, however, discourage you, and it will be less likely to do so, if you are careful to

keep the motive of which you have just spoken in its subordinate place. When our chief object in our habits of life is to secure the approbation of God, we shall be comparatively contented, though the pleasant results do not follow of our conduct being equally acceptable to man. I have made use of the expression "comparatively," because it is quite right, and not at all inconsistent with a *primary* regard to the approbation of God, that we should also desire the esteem and approbation of our fellow-men. Only be careful not to let the one desire grow up above and overshadow the other. The wish to glorify God, and to be accepted by him, has no real existence, unless it reigns supreme in the heart. These are motives, or rather principles, which must cease to be, when they are deposed from their rightful pre-eminence, or even when they cease to be the life and soul of all subordinate ones. Study then, each day, to become more honest, more trustworthy, more discreet, because it is only by the growth of qualities of this nature that we can increase in meetness for heaven, and assimilate more and more to that glorious likeness which we lost at the fall, and which, through grace, we recover in the renewal of our natures by God's Holy Spirit.

These may, it is true, be only minute features of the resemblance, but they are essential to its completeness, and besides, by their involving the exercise of watchfulness and consideration for others, they are an assistance to the exercise of many other good qualities. The effort by which we conquer the smallest fault, or acquire the slightest habit of virtue, is never useful to us on that particular point alone. The gladdening reward that ever waits on the smallest victory over self, is, that it not only bestows the happiness of present triumph, but gives a pledge of success in all future conflicts.

If you strengthen your will, and exercise watchfulness in keeping a secret confided to you, either in words, or by implication, the additional strength thus acquired will be available for your assistance against many other temptations to which you may be exposed. Any circumstance, any action which contributes in the smallest degree to strengthen the will to a virtuous course, ought not to be esteemed as trifling. In its consequences, in its effect on our character, it abides with us for ever, in time, and throughout eternity.

CONVERSATION FIFTH.

FRIDAY.

HORTENSIA.

HORTENSIA was a celebrated Roman lady, daughter of the orator Hortensius, whose eloquence she had inherited in the most eminent degree. When the triumvirs had obliged fourteen thousand women to give, on oath, an account of their possessions, to defray the expenses of the State, Hortensia undertook to plead their cause, and was so successful in her attempt, that one thousand of her female fellow-sufferers escaped from the avarice of the triumvirate. The harangue which she delivered on this occasion was extant in the time of Quintilian, who speaks of it with applause.

Cecilia. I have chosen this anecdote of Hortensia for the subject of our morning's



HORTENSIA.—p. 82.

conversation, that I may try to impress on your mind the duty of making a useful employment of our powers of speech.

Grace. It may be the duty of those who have the gift of eloquence, to employ it usefully ; but as I find a difficulty in expressing myself in the most common words, I do not think I can be considered liable to any of Hortensia's responsibilities.

Cecilia. By diligent effort and practice, you may in time very much improve your manner of expressing yourself. Listen to the words which other people make use of to convey the same ideas, and then think over the difference between your words and theirs, until you ascertain clearly in what degree a different mode of expression alters the sense. At first your facility of speaking will be lessened instead of increased by such observations as these, for they are only the intellectual part of the process, and it is habit alone which can make the practical part, even as easy to you as it was before you began to reflect on the subject.

Grace. But there are so few opportunities of practice in the conversations which are usually carried on, there is nothing said which might not be expressed as well by a baby beginning to speak, as by Hortensia herself. You know,

Cecilia, it would not be of much consequence in what way one says, "I hope to-morrow may be a fine day," or "Mrs. Morton has just had a beautiful dress from Paris."

Cecilia. The mode of expression cannot indeed make much difference in the meaning of either of these two observations; however, I must tell you, Grace, that the great writers of old did not think even such trifling sentences as these unworthy of their notice. I have read that Plato's tablets were covered all over with different arrangements of a sentence as simple as either of your illustrations. "I went down to the Piræus with Alciphron, the son of Glaucus."

Grace. Indeed, Cecilia, that is very curious; still that was for writing, and I have heard you yourself say, than any studied manner of expressing one's self in conversation was very disagreeable.

Cecilia. The *appearance* of study is disagreeable in most things, and always remote from the perfection of art.

Besides, conversation requires an entirely different style of expression from writing, apparent carelessness often giving it a piquancy and force which could not be attained by the same means in writing.

Grace. And the exactness of expression seems of so much less consequence in conversation than in writing; because the tone of voice and expression of countenance have often more meaning than the words themselves, and prevent their being mistaken.

Cecilia. Very true, Grace. Still this is no excuse for incorrectness of expression, the disadvantages of which are doubled. It not only misleads those to whom we speak, but has, besides, an injurious effect on our own mind. A careless, incorrect habit of speaking influences our mode of thinking, and as it originally proceeds from want of precision in the mind, so does it react on our habits of thought, and increase the carelessness from which it proceeds. However, the subject of our present conversation is intended to be a moral, not an intellectual one,—it relates not the manner in which you can acquire the eloquence of Hortensia, but the duty of employing the gift of speech in the same spirit and for the same object. Even this very morning an opportunity was offered you of following her example.

Grace. How, Cecilia? I am really anxious to know how.

Cecilia. Do you remember when the man brought your pony-carriage to the door, and

Henry observed that the harness was not properly cleaned ?

Grace. You thought that Henry was too angry about it. I saw that, in your looks, at the time.

Cecilia. Henry was more vexed than I ever saw him before, for he is a well-tempered, good-natured boy in general ; he became still more angry when the servant said he had not had time to clean the harness properly, and he frightened the poor man so much that he could not explain the true state of the case, which I afterwards found out, and which you knew at the time, Grace, though you did not make any use of your knowledge.

Grace. Do you mean that I knew at the time he had been too busy to clean the harness ?

Cecilia. You knew that one of the servants had been sent with a note to Mrs. Clayton, a journey of twenty miles, which took up the whole of yesterday evening, after the pony-carriage had come in ; and if you had reflected for a moment, you would have asked whether he was the person who had gone with the message, and suggested it to Henry to moderate his anger. It would have been kind to Henry as well as to the poor man.

Grace. Indeed, Cecilia, I was very sorry to

see the man so frightened, and Henry so angry; but I was thinking so much about the visit we were going to pay, (a visit I have so long wished for,) that I never remembered any thing about the message to Mrs. Clayton.

Cecilia. There was no forgetfulness of self in the excuse you make. The cause you assign for your error is a very natural one, but this is the very reason that it requires to be carefully guarded against. The scriptural injunction, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," is one which requires for its fulfilment, constant watchfulness and denial of self. A habit of allowing our thoughts to dwell exclusively on the subjects which give pain or pleasure to one's self, will of course disqualify one for a readiness to help others, when they are found fault with, or are in any other trouble or distress. If you had left your room this morning asking yourself the question which you were repeating to Henry yesterday, and recommending to him—you would then have been on the watch for an opportunity of providing an answer to it, such as you would like to give.

Grace. I remember, Cecilia, the question you mean; it is in the poem which we were taught to repeat for self-examination at night. Have I

“Lessen’d by a feather’s weight,
Th’ amount of human woe?”

Instead of such thoughts, however, I left my room this morning thinking how I could best amuse myself; how I could manage to remove all the difficulties which I knew aunt Herbert would throw in the way of my going with you to Dalton. Filled entirely with these selfish thoughts, I never troubled myself about Henry’s being allowed to appear so unjust, and the poor groom’s being severely blamed for what he could not help.

Cecilia. This was a case that required no eloquence, you see, Grace, no talents, only a simple statement of facts. It was a moral failure, not an intellectual one. Thoughtfulness for others, a watchful attention to their interests, requires indeed great self-control and self-denial, but no great powers of mind. Yesterday evening, Mary Hamilton made herself useful in the very way in which you failed this morning.

Grace. How, Cecilia? Was I in the room at the time?

Cecilia. Yes, you were, but you were too much engaged with your own pleasure to attend to what was going on. Mrs. Clayton complained to aunt Herbert of the careless-

ness of her dressmaker, who, she said, had just spoiled a very expensive dress she was making for her, and she asked your aunt, whether she knew of one whom she could recommend in her place. Aunt Herbert said that she had at that moment an opportunity of sending for an excellent dress-maker who wished to get such a situation, and sat down to write a note which would have sealed the fate of the other person. However, Mary Hamilton, who had till then appeared as much engrossed as you were by the exquisite music at the other end of the room, went over to Mrs. Clayton, and reminded her, in a whisper, that her dress-maker had been kept awake for several nights by violent rheumatism, and was consequently so ill from fatigue and want of rest, that the mistake in the work might be owing to that alone, and not to the least carelessness. Mrs. Clayton, who is really good-natured, though so thoughtless, quite forgot her vexation about the spoiled dress, when she was reminded of the woman's illness, and asked aunt Herbert not to send her note, saying that she would try farther, as she had heard of an excuse for her conduct.

Grace. I am afraid aunt Herbert would not have been so easily softened. It would require all the eloquence of Hortensia herself to

convince her that any one with whom she was angry was less deserving of blame than she supposed.

Cecilia. You allude to your interference about Henry yesterday ; but surely, Grace, that was not managed in the gentle, humble and conciliating spirit of Mary Hamilton. Henry had taken the pony out to ride, without, as usual, asking aunt Herbert whether she wanted him ; and aunt Herbert, when she had afterwards a message of importance to send to Dalton, quite forgot, in her vexation at finding the pony and Henry both gone without consulting her, how she had said the evening before, that Henry might ride every day for the rest of the week.

Grace. And she forgot too that she was out driving all the morning, so that if Henry had waited to see her and ask her leave, he would not have had any time for his ride.

Cecilia. Then you considered her conduct altogether as very unjust.

Grace. I did indeed, but I did not say so. I merely stated the facts to her, in excuse for Henry, and yet she was more angry with him than ever, after I had spoken.

Cecilia. Because you had represented her conduct as very unjust, though you did not make use of the very word injustice ; and it

requires a generosity of spirit which one must not often expect, to bear having one's faults distinctly pointed out, and a clear proof placed before one of being in the wrong. *You* do not, I am sure, consider aunt Herbert the kind of person to tolerate such unpleasant lessons; how could you then be so imprudent as to inflict them on her?

Grace. But what do you think I should have done, when I heard Henry so unjustly accused, and knew that all the pleasure of his ride would be destroyed by aunt Herbert's being very angry when he came back?

Cecilia. I think I know what would have had a much better effect than the plan you adopted. In the first place, I should not have appeared to suppose that aunt Herbert was in the wrong. You might have left her to find out that for herself, if she liked. It would have been quite enough to remind her of her conversation the night before, and of her absence all the morning. This you might have done in an impartial, mild, suggestive tone and manner, as if you intended merely to place the facts before her, leaving it to her decision, whether Henry was to blame or not. If you had done this simply and gently, and then changed the subject, she would probably, when left to her-

self, have reflected on what you said, and been quite reconciled to Henry by the time he came home.

Grace. But I could not help feeling angry, too angry to think what was best to be done, when I heard the dear boy so unjustly blamed, and knew how fretted he would be by aunt Herbert's reproaches.

Cecilia. We are too apt to deceive ourselves by imagining that such anger, when our friends are accused or injured, is an entirely generous feeling. It is, on the contrary, quite true, that "indignation is the handsome brother of malice and hatred." However disinterested it may appear to us, that must be an evil feeling which excites any ill-will against *persons*, instead of being rigorously restricted to *things*. I am sure that if you carefully examine into your feelings towards aunt Herbert, you will acknowledge that they were not free from sin,—nor even from a taint of "malice and hatred," though they may have appeared to you at the time as nothing but generous indignation at the wrong done to your brother.

Grace. I am afraid, Cecilia, that you are right; that I was even more angry with my aunt than sorry for Henry; still it seems very unreasonable to forbid any feeling of

indignation, when a dear friend is unjustly accused.

Cecilia. I only wish to restrain such feelings of indignation, (in a degree natural and right,) within such limits as will prevent their being injurious either to your own moral character, or to the interests of your friends. You allow, Grace, that your indignation did not answer the purpose of reconciling Mrs. Herbert to Henry's conduct?

Grace. I acknowledge that I was too much excited to reflect what would be the most prudent way to act.

Cecilia. And your excitement was, in fact, a selfish indulgence of your own feelings under the specious appearance of anxiety for Henry. You would otherwise have been collected enough to consider that the best course to pursue would have been, in addition to what I before recommended to you, to join in aunt Herbert's regret for the pony's absence, and to sympathize with her in the inconvenience it occasioned her. There is always some point or other in all people's complaints or reproaches, in which we can sympathize, though, on the whole, they may be unjust. We ought always to seek out this point of agreement, and dwell on that first. By thus showing sympathy in their feelings,

we may acquire influence over them to soften their anger, and gradually bring them over to our own opinion. So long as we appear to consider people wholly unjust or wholly unreasonable, we shall never be able to win them over to forgiveness and indulgence.

Grace. Then I see now, Cecilia, how it was that Mary Hamilton persuaded aunt Herbert to forgive the children who had carried off her flowers. I was so angry at the severe punishment aunt Herbert spoke of inflicting on the poor little things, that I said the flowers were ugly and withered, and that the children did not know they were doing wrong. Mary Hamilton, on the contrary, entirely agreed in aunt Herbert's opinion, that the flowers were pretty, and gracefully arranged, and also appeared so sorry for their being taken, and called the children's conduct so provoking, that aunt Herbert soon became quite calm. And then she was so pleased with Mary Hamilton, that she ended the business an hour or two after by forgiving the children entirely.

Cecilia. And why, Grace, should you not have been able to defend Henry with equal success? You consider yourself much more capable than Mary.

Grace. I see clearly now, Cecilia, that capa-

city can be of no use to a person, who cannot control her temper. All Hortensia's eloquence—all insight into character, would have been unavailing to me, while I yielded to my feelings the entire control over my will, and indulged a fancied generosity at the expense of him whom I affected to defend. Mary Hamilton cared much more about the punishment of those children than I did, for they belong to the class she has been teaching here, and she is very fond of them; but she subdued her excitement on their account, instead of thinking it right, as I really did.

Cecilia. And as many people do, under the same circumstances, that of a friend's being injured. I trust, however, for the future, you will never suffer any feeling of indignation without inquiring closely into its cause, and its possible results. That state of mind in which we cherish any feeling of our nature that ought to be brought into subjection, must be injurious to ourselves; and you now see that it is equally injurious to our friends, by depriving us of sufficient self-control and self-possession to find out the most prudent means for the attainment of our end. There are, however, many useful ways of employing the gift of speech, besides those which have been just discussed. I do

not mean, at present, to allude to the extensive influence which may be exercised by those who have powerful minds, and have attained to excellence in the art of conversation. This subject is more connected with the high species of talent possessed by Hortensia, or relates to another period of your life. You cannot yet converse in a manner to be listened to with interest by an indifferent observer, nor are your powers of mind sufficiently developed to give much weight or importance to your opinion. That period may arrive ; but, in the mean time, your efforts ought to be directed to cherish that spirit in conversation, which will alone make future excellence in the art desirable.

Grace. Will you give me an illustration of your meaning ? I know I sometimes say cross, unkind words, but they refer to another branch of my conduct.

Cecilia. No, I do not mean cross, angry words, for they bear the stamp of sin on the face of them ; but can you not remember any case in which your words were prompted by an unamiable feeling, and must have given pain ; though, if they were to be literally repeated, there would not appear any sin in them ?

Grace. I cannot understand what you refer to.

Cecilia. I do not wonder at it, for many people live out their appointed years without ever observing the indirect tendency of their ordinary observations, or considering themselves responsible for it. Yet how much of the petty unhappiness of life is caused by these careless words, and how injurious are they to the speakers themselves, proceeding, as they do in almost every case, from some unsuspected, almost undiscoverable feeling! The real way to get rid of the habit of saying such words is, to endeavour to root out the feelings which give rise to them; but these are often so shadowy and undefined, that there is great difficulty in their discovery, nor can it be effected otherwise than by a careful examination of any words that appear to give pain to others, though they may seem perfectly innocent to ourselves at the time of their utterance.

Grace. I shall understand all that much better when I have heard your illustration.

Cecilia. This is it. Aunt Herbert told us at breakfast, that after a great deal of difficulty, she had at last been able to make arrangements for our going to the Burning Springs, and that she hoped you would be so much pleased as to make amends for all the trouble she had taken.

Grace. Well, Cecilia, I said I was much obliged to her.

Cecilia. But that was not all you said; and, indeed, the haughty tone in which those words were spoken, very much altered their mere verbal meaning. In the next place, however, you assured her that, as she had not allowed you to go while the roses were in blossom, you cared very little about the expedition; that you hated long drives, and particularly disliked the way in which she had arranged our party.

Grace. Really, Cecilia, I could not help feeling provoked at her trying to make out that it was so much trouble to entertain us,—that it had required so much good-nature and exertion on her part to effect the most simple thing in the world. Then I said nothing about the roses and the drive that was not perfectly true; and it will be very disagreeable to me to dine with the Daltons on our way.

Cecilia. Still, you are going to do all these disagreeable things, of your own free will.

Grace. But I did not choose aunt Herbert to think that she was conferring great obligations on me, and making me extraordinarily happy.

Cecilia. But why should you have wished to lessen her satisfaction? How could it have

injured you if she had continued to suppose that you were indebted to her for a great deal of pleasure? Would it not, on the contrary, have been very useful to you by cherishing your aunt's kindly feelings towards you? people, in general, more especially people of her disposition, feel more love and favour towards those on whom they have conferred obligations.

Grace. Yes; that is because she is so proud, she could not bear that any one else should confer favours upon her,—at least that they should speak of them as favours.

Cecilia. And is not that exactly your own case? You have now discovered the source from whence proceeded your unkind words of this morning. Yes, Grace, the unwillingness to receive favours, however fair and independent the form it may sometimes assume, does, in reality, deserve no name but that of pride. If you had not been guilty of the same feelings in your own heart, the display of them in Aunt Herbert would not have irritated you. It is a true general rule, that we ought always to examine ourselves with peculiar strictness as to our being guilty of any fault that particularly annoys us in others.

The case is clear and not to be denied,
The proud are always most provoked by pride ;
And though self-idolized in every case,
Hate their own likeness in a brother's face.

If we thus make our temptations to anger, pride, and ingratitude, means of assisting us in the discovery of our own secret sins, we shall turn our very difficulties into helps to more rapid advancement in the right way. When we are annoyed by any words addressed to us, we should try to ascertain the feelings that prompted them, not from motives of mere curiosity, or, it might be, of malice and hatred ; but that, having ascertained where their sting lies, we should be able to avoid inflicting the same pain on others. To few of us, indeed, is it given to benefit others by our words to the same degree as the Roman Hortensia, but we may all cultivate the same spirit of benevolence, and endeavour to make our words contribute to the happiness of others. A kind, considerate, self-denying word is, in reality, a moral action, which becomes a part of our character, by assisting in its formation ; and in the hearts of others its "echo is endless." Always suspect every feeling which seeks to check the utterance of such expressions as

those of which I have been speaking to you ; and when, on strict self-examination, you detect any admixture of evil in it, exercise true heroism by a successful struggle against it. "He that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city."



CONVERSATION SIXTH.

SATURDAY.

PANTHEA.

IN one of the first victories which Cyrus gained over the Assyrians, a beautiful princess, of the name of Panthea, was amongst his numerous captives. She was the wife of Abradates, king of Susiana. From the moment she fell into his power, Cyrus treated her with the most generous kindness, by which means the gratitude and admiration of Panthea were equally excited. Her representations induced her husband to break off his alliance with the Assyrians, and to join Cyrus's army with all his own forces. Previous to the battle of Thymer, with her own hands she clasped on the splendid golden armour which she had prepared for this decisive occasion, and exhorted Abradates to prove his love to her and his



gratitude to Cyrus, by sacrificing, if it were needful, his own life, to assure the victory to her benefactor. Her parting injunctions were strictly obeyed. The success of the battle was partly owing to the skilful conduct and devoted services of Abradates, and he was at last killed, while performing prodigies of valour. Panthea's love for her husband was too great to allow her to survive his loss. She thus sacrificed both lives to her gratitude. Notwithstanding the earnest endeavours of Cyrus to reconcile her to existence, she killed herself on the dead body of Abradates. They were buried in the same grave, with magnificent honours, by Cyrus, and the monument he erected over them was still in existence in the time of Xenophon.

Cecilia. Well, Grace, have you any successful struggle against temptation to tell me of—any confession to make?

Grace. Both, Cecilia; alas! my attempts to be a heroine in daily life, have as yet got no farther than wishes. My will has never been strong enough to carry them into execution.

Cecilia. To carry them into execution—fully,

Grace,—I must add that last word for you ; as I have myself seen some attempts, (during your first week of trial too,) which went much further than wishes. Have courage, dear Grace. I am sure that in your case the beginning has been a good one. You have laid a sure foundation for the success of future efforts, in a deep sense of your own weakness, and in a childlike docility of spirit. Tell me what the temptation was which you could not resist ?

Grace. I did resist it in part. There was a severe struggle against it in my mind, but surely at a time when our conversation on the subject was only just over, and all my good resolutions were fresh and new, I ought to have been more successful than I was.

Cecilia. Well, let me hear the story. Was it not something that took place at the piano ? I heard some of the first words that were spoken, and I saw a deep crimson spot on your cheek, which showed there was some strong excitement within, but I could not understand what it was all about.

Grace. Well, then, I will tell you. You know how beautifully Harriet Howard plays ?

Cecilia. Beautifully indeed ; I never heard any one who was not an artist play so well. I

observed that you played a duet with Clara Morton, immediately after Harriet left the piano, and I heard your aunt asking you to do it.

Grace. Yes, I played because she wished it so much; but I was very sorry to do it, because I knew that every one would watch the playing of the person who ventured to succeed Harriet Howard at the piano, and that every one would be surprised at the difference.

Cecilia. Still this could not have been so wounding to your vanity, as if the case had been one of less marked superiority. No one is expected to play like Harriet Howard.

Grace. So I imagined, and this reconciled me in a degree to playing immediately after her. I was still very much frightened, however, and made many more mistakes than Mary Hamilton, though of course she is not so good a musician as I am, as she is not so old and has not been taking lessons so long.

As soon as we stopped, aunt Herbert praised Mary Hamilton for her playing, and then said very angrily, "I am sorry I can't extend the same praise to you, Grace. There is nothing on earth to prevent your playing as well as Harriet Howard. You have had the same

masters, and if you had had the same patience and perseverance, you might have practised as much, and as successfully as she has done." I felt very angry, Cecilia ; and I suppose it was at this time you saw the flush on my face. I said in a tone which I was afraid you had heard, though the words might not have distinctly reached you,—“No, aunt Herbert, it is not patience and perseverance that makes the difference between us, but the difference of the objects on which we both exercise our patience and perseverance.” You looked distressed, Cecilia, and the moment after I had spoken, I felt as much distressed as you could be. I felt how unworthy my conduct was of your instructions, and of your love for me. I raised my thoughts still higher than my dear earthly friend, and then I was made strong enough to speak again with a different feeling, and to try to explain away what I had said before. I went on to add, “Besides, my dear aunt, I have often heard Cecilia remark, that Harriet Howard had so much musical genius, that it was quite natural to her to play better than any degree of practice would enable others to do.” I knew this would please Harriet Howard very much, because she has told me two or

three times, that you were the only judge of music in the house, and she often says herself that natural genius is the only thing she cares to be praised for, as quite stupid persons might acquire excellence by practice. It was the same reason that made my words as difficult for me to say, as they were pleasant for her to hear; for you know, Cecilia, that I should rather be praised by you than by any one else, and I too, as well as Harriet Howard, set a much greater value on natural talents than acquired ones. Still more, Cecilia, you cannot think how difficult it was for me to speak affectionately to aunt Herbert, and make excuses to her, when all the pride of my nature had been excited by her unkindness. However, I know that nothing can make amends for the rudeness of my first speech. Harriet Howard, I am afraid, understood perfectly all that I meant to imply.

Cecilia. I am afraid she must have done so, for she is not wanting in general intelligence, though her mistaken ideas about natural gifts, keep her behind those who would otherwise only be her equals. However, as you say, your second speech was exactly the sort of thing to soothe her, and we must hope that such

was the effect it produced. For yourself the struggle was, I am sure, a severe one,—so severe that even a partial victory is just cause for thankfulness and encouragement. You undervalue the exceeding difficulties of self-control, when you suppose that it can be acquired so easily and in so short a time. A very slight success in so difficult an art, is all that can be expected for some time. It is not yet a week since you began your attempts to be a “heroine,” and I am quite contented with your progress during this short time. Now that our conversations are drawing to a close, and the period of our separation approaching, I feel satisfaction in the conviction that you have already learned to be a monitor to yourself, and that the spirit of watchfulness and self-scrutiny, which has been excited within you, will be cherished and rendered effectual by earnest prayer and humble dependence on Divine teaching.

I have chosen the story of Panthea for this day’s subject, that it may serve as a means of introducing some observations I wish to make to you on the much neglected virtue of gratitude. The feeling expressed in Young’s lines—

He that’s ungrateful has no fault but one,
All other crimes may pass for virtues in him,

finds an echo in every voice, when the subject is considered in the abstract; but if we look around, how difficult it is to find one grateful person among all these contemners of ingratitude! In such speculations as these, it is always safest to look first at home. Grace, towards whom do you feel gratitude? To whom do you show it?

Grace. I know that you think I am not as grateful to aunt Herbert as I ought to be.

Cecilia. You are right; this is the particular point to which I wished to bring you. This is a fair test of your possessing, in any degree, the quality of gratitude, because aunt Herbert has conferred great favours on you, but, at the same time, annoys you very often in trifles. The spark of gratitude must indeed be a feeble one, when it requires such constant supplies of the fuel of benefits to kindle it into any thing like a flame, and even then the slightest breath of unkindness is sufficient to extinguish it entirely! Is this your case, Grace? and why should it be so, for your nature is an affectionate one;—why then are you not more grateful for kindness received?

Grace. I think I am grateful sometimes. I am very grateful to you, Cecilia.

Cecilia. Because you love me, and also because I have done nothing yet to vex you. All amiable natures are grateful to the people they love, but the true test of *character* is being grateful to those whom we do not love, and yet from whom we have received real kindness. There can be no comparison drawn between the benefits conferred on you by aunt Herbert and by me. She took you and your brother to her house, when your parents were obliged to leave you behind in England, and she has been ever since most careful of your health and welfare.

Grace. But you know that aunt Dalton made the same offer, at the same time, and that aunt Herbert was extremely anxious that her's should be accepted, as a proof that she was considered the better protector of the two.

Cecilia. Very well, Grace ; this observation of your's serves to throw light on the subject that we are considering. Does it not show you, that when we receive favours from those we do not love, instead of endeavouring to excite and cherish the feeling of gratitude, it is the tendency of the heart to depreciate the motives, and explain away the kindness of our benefactors ? It would be as easy for you to

qualify and depreciate my conduct towards you, as aunt Herbert's, by suggestions which would really appear quite probable and natural. Such as, "She has taken a great apparent interest in me, and watched over me very carefully; but then she had nothing else to do at the time, and her vanity was flattered by the great influence I allowed her to acquire over me, and the respect I felt for her."

Grace. Oh no! Cecilia, I know your character too well, to attribute such motives and feelings to you.

Cecilia. You think you know me, but cannot you imagine it possible that the affection you feel for me may blind you to my faults, as completely as the contrary feeling blinds you to the merits of aunt Herbert? I know you will tell me that you cannot help this, that the feelings cannot be changed at one's will; and in one point of view this is true; they will obey no *direct* control. This should, however, only make us the more diligent to ascertain and practise all such habits as may *indirectly* influence our feelings, and gradually constrain our love and gratitude to take the right channels.

Grace. But with respect to aunt Herbert,

what can I do to make me feel towards her that gratitude which you think is my duty?

Cecilia. In the first place, you must carefully avoid judging of the motives of her kindness, and imagining what unamiable ones there could possibly have been. Keep your thoughts from dwelling even for a moment on the subject. Then I would have you cherish the memory of every act of her's, however trifling it may be, that made you feel grateful and pleased at the time, though afterwards soon forgotten. Can you think of any thing of this kind, Grace?

Grace. I am afraid, Cecilia, that this is a point on which my memory is a very bad one.

Cecilia. And yet it is of much more importance to the formation of the character, to make a moral rather than an intellectual use of one's memory.

Grace. I recollect now, Cecilia, a circumstance that I had quite forgotten, and yet now that our conversation reminds me of it, I really feel obliged to aunt Herbert over again, and quite as much as I did at the time. You may remember we were staying at Ravenhill last spring?

Cecilia. Yes, I heard of your being there.

Grace. There were only two carriages to

take the whole party wherever they wanted to go, and it so happened that Van Amburgh and his wild beasts arrived at a neighbouring village, to exhibit only once, on the very same day that the flower-show took place at Reading. As aunt Herbert had seen Van Amburgh before, she arranged that she should go to Reading, and that I should go with the Howards in the other direction. None of us had ever seen a lion, even without a Van Amburgh, and my delight was so great at the prospect of my next day's amusement, that it was a long time before I could go to sleep, and when I awoke it was with one of my violent headaches, so violent that I could not even get up. All the Howards came to see me, and were very good-natured about my disappointment. I begged them not to delay in the expectation of my getting better, and they did not. I heard the carriage going away from the door at the time that had been appointed. I could not restrain my tears any longer, and I cried bitterly,—so bitterly that my head-ache (as you know it often happens when the head-ache is nervous) went away, and I was able to get up and dress. I was nearly ready to go down stairs, when aunt Herbert came into my

room, to my great surprise, for I thought she was half-way to the flower-show. However she now told me, that she would give that up, if there was any chance of my being able to go with her to see the wild beasts; that she would not allow the other party to wait, but that she was quite ready and willing to put off going herself, until I felt I was well enough to accompany her. I was quite delighted, and very much obliged to her. I spent a very pleasant day, and she never reminded me afterwards of her having missed the flower-show on my account.

Cecilia. I have observed, Grace, that when we show a very lively sense of obligation ourselves, even the least refined of our benefactors do not think it necessary to remind us of their good deeds. In the case you have just mentioned, you felt very grateful to aunt Herbert, nay, much pleased with her; therefore you probably expressed your feelings with sufficient warmth to satisfy her. It was not the same when she gave up going to Pendlestone, because she could not take you with her.

Grace. And she has been ever since hinting at the sacrifice she made in giving up that visit. Whenever she sees a beautiful picture, it

reminds her of the pictures she was to have seen at Pendlestone; whenever she hears of a beautiful garden, no gardens could equal those which would have been shown to her at Pendlestone. Dear Cecilia, how could any one be grateful for that sort of kindness?

Cecilia. By determining not to look upon it in the point of view you have just mentioned, but solely in a favourable one. If you had expressed gratitude enough at the time, the sacrifice being a really kind one, aunt Herbert would probably not have indulged afterwards in any of those reproachful hints. They are very trying to the temper, I know, Grace, but it would lessen their ill-effects very much if they led you carefully to examine how far they may be excused by any error on your own part. You were not properly grateful, I am afraid, for her giving up the visit to Pendlestone, because from indulging the habit of "indiscreetly handling" her motives, you allowed yourself to fancy that this action did not proceed from kindness to you.

Grace. I know that it did not altogether, but as you said before, Cecilia, I ought not to have dwelt on that part of the reasons which prevented her going to Pendlestone. There

certainly was some kindness to me in her motives, and if I had thought of that instead of the other, I might have felt grateful, and might have shown her that I was so. And then, Cecilia, there is so much truth in what you say about the use of trying to recollect every act of kindness we have received, and thinking over it. I assure you, I feel quite affectionate towards aunt Herbert, since I have thought over that good-natured action of her's at Ravenhill, and all the details of it. How kindly she tried to remove the swelling and redness from my eyes, and how carefully she wrapped her own cloak round me, lest I should feel cold and be ill again ! If she would always act thus, how much I should love her !

Cecilia. But, Grace, would not frequently thinking over every action of this kind have much the same effect as if the actions themselves were frequently repeated,—and that not alone on your own mind, for the kindly feelings excited there would extend themselves to your manner, so that aunt Herbert seeing you becoming affectionate, would probably have her own stern nature softened ? Do you understand me, Grace ?

Grace. Perfectly well ; and I feel the truth

of all that you say. But oh! Cecilia, how much easier it would be to perform some great action of gratitude, like Panthea, than to carry on a perpetual struggle against one's feelings, in trying to change their nature!

Cecilia. This is what people often think, but I doubt whether they would find themselves equal to the task, when the hour of trial arrived. Panthea sacrificed all her earthly happiness to the gratitude which she considered a duty, and although this was but a single action, yet it was so extensive, nay, universal in its sacrifices, that I cannot think any one would have been capable of such an action who had not carefully and habitually cherished all noble and kindly feelings which a heathen mind entertained:—a determination to act aright in the small details of every-day life is the only preparation for the great trials that come to few, and but seldom even to those few. By great actions alone, our characters could never be formed, or our course of discipline fulfilled.

The discussion of your conduct towards aunt Herbert has taken up so much time, that I can only suggest to you how useful it would be to carry on the same system which I have been recommending with respect to her,

through all the details of your life. For instance, Caroline Hamilton brought you that book to read, though she had not finished it herself, because she knew you were going away, and might not be able to get it soon again; her sister Mary changed the ribbons of her dress for yours, because she had heard you say that you thought them prettier; Clara Morton gathered for you the finest flowers in their conservatory, and Miss Barton sat up till one o'clock last night, to copy the music which you wished for. These are all trifles in themselves, but they may be of real importance in their softening influence on your character, if you treasure them up in your memory, and endeavour to excite your feelings of gratitude for them by thinking over every little accompanying circumstance, that either made the act of kindness a sacrifice on their part, or enhanced the pleasure of it to you.

Grace. Yes, Cecilia, that can be very easily done. You mean that I ought to remember that Caroline's sending me the book was doubly good-natured, because she thinks the story beautiful, and may be obliged to return it on Monday, before she has finished it herself. Then Mary's changing her ribbons for mine was really a sacrifice on her part, as she never

likes to wear the colours that were sent to me, and showed so much consideration besides, for she knew I should wish to wear the frock they belonged to, on Monday, and that I should have had no opportunity of getting them elsewhere. Clara Morton's bouquet shewed a great deal of generosity, for she was asked by another friend to send her flowers by the same hand that took mine, and as there were not valuable flowers enough in the conservatory for two such large bouquets, she had the trouble and expense of getting them from Mrs. H.'s gardener. I found out this quite by chance. Then last of all, Miss Barton, you know, was obliged to set out on her journey very early this morning, and as the only time she had for copying the music was late at night, she lost a good part of her night's rest by it.

Cecilia. Yes, you have arranged all that very ingeniously, and to no better use can you ever apply your ingenuity than to that of discovering the merits of those around you, and cherishing your kindly feelings towards them. This is a sure way of promoting your own happiness and that of others, and one of the subordinate means by which we may daily become assimilated more and more closely to the glorious likeness of him whose name is "LOVE."

CONVERSATION SEVENTH.

SUNDAY.

“SO LIKEWISE YE, WHEN YE SHALL HAVE DONE ALL THESE THINGS WHICH ARE COMMANDED YOU, SAY, WE ARE UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS; WE HAVE DONE THAT WHICH IT WAS OUR DUTY TO DO.”—LUKE XVII. 10.

Cecilia. I have chosen for the subject of our last conversation one that is of a different nature from all the preceding. Having examined into the principles which prompted all these acts of heroism, I have, in conclusion, sought out one great truth, round which all the results of our former conversations might, as it were, gather and combine themselves. The text which I have read to you is well suited to our present purpose, combining an implied assertion of the necessity of a strict fulfilment of duty, with a caution which ought to be constantly kept in

mind by those who seek to employ and improve to the utmost their *own* powers, even in humble dependence on that higher strength which can alone make their efforts availing. Our blessed Saviour, to render his injunction the more striking, supposes an entire fulfilment of the law, "When ye shall have done *all things that are commanded you.*" Our heavenly Teacher suggests the rendering of such obedience, to add more force to the injunction that follows. If, even in such a case as the one supposed, we are directed to esteem ourselves "unprofitable servants," how much deeper and stronger ought the feeling to be in view of our imperfect obedience!

Grace. I think there is very little danger of my ever considering myself as any thing but "an unprofitable servant," for the more I try to conquer my wicked feelings and to cherish good ones, the more clearly is my own sinfulness shown to me. I think that my sinfulness has even been greater during the past week than it was before, and yet I never strove so earnestly against my temptations and faults as I have done during that time.

Cecilia. There are two obvious reasons for this. You never before watched so closely

the hidden feelings of your heart, and the secret motives of your words and actions. The air in this room now looks pure and clear; but if you admitted a concentrated ray of sunshine into it, while the rest was kept in darkness, you would see a thousand motes dancing in this ray. Thus it is when the searching light of self-examination makes its way into the hidden chambers of the heart; evils are then detected, of whose existence you had before no suspicion.

Grace. Indeed, Cecilia, I knew very little of the wickedness of my heart until, during the past week, I have tried to make it bring forth good fruit.

Cecilia. And is not this deeper self-knowledge alone a most happy result of your efforts? The second reason by which I can account for the apparent increase of evil within you, is the increased activity of your spiritual enemies, caused by their fear lest you should escape from their hands. So long as people go on smoothly and quietly in the broad path of this world's pursuits, it would not be the policy of Satan to assail them with any violent temptations to sin. They might be set on their guard, and their eyes opened to their danger. Satan knows well (though Christians will not often

believe it) that the end of such worldly habits of life, however useful or amiable they may sometimes appear, is surely death. Where there is no self-denial, no taking up the cross and following the Saviour, there can be no future inheriting of the kingdom of heaven, because there is no growing meetness for it. Those only who suffer with the Saviour here, (suffer from a principle of faith in Him, and of grateful love,) have the promise of reigning with Him in glory. Satan therefore sees that the amiable worldling is his sure captive, though he be not bound in the chains of any open sin. He leaves such a one at rest, such rest as this world can give; but not so does he act towards those who have in earnest begun to walk in the narrow path, and are struggling to free themselves from a captivity of which they now feel the reality. Of the existence and active enmity of invisible spiritual agents, we have all from infancy been accustomed to profess a vague belief; there are, however, few whose faith on this point is of a practical nature, though it is one of great importance both as a source of comfort and warning. Yes, comfort, Grace, for however strangely it may at first sound, is it not a source of comfort to the per-

plexed and trembling Christian to believe that many of the evil thoughts which distress, and the violent temptations that assail him, may often be the effects of an external agency, and not a part of his own nature?

In cases like your own, I have often found this consideration one of great comfort. It is a complaint that has been often made to me by my young friends, that it was after they began in earnest to try to serve God, that their tempers appeared more violent, their longing after worldly things more frequent, and their envies and jealousies thronging thicker and faster upon them. This is a great trial, but it is rendered less overwhelming by the belief that it is the earnestness and sincerity of our efforts after improvement, that excite our spiritual enemies to make use of such means as might lead us to despair of success. But their object will not be attained; for there is One who will not "suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it."

I have been till now speaking of the efforts that will be made to frighten you out of the narrow path, but there will come a time when

the mode of attack may assume a more dangerous form, when the injunction to consider yourself an unprofitable servant, may no longer appear so easy to obey as it does now. Your present weakness may one day change into strength, or into what will appear strength from its contrast with the past. Your will may become strong, your habits of self-denial and self-control may be formed; kindly feelings cherished and cultivated may create an atmosphere of love around you; those who knew you in old times will wonder at the change; those who never knew you before will wonder at your difference from others. All this is not only possible, Grace,—it is probable. You may become an object of affection to all your friends, of admiration to all who can appreciate you, and this will be your hour of danger. When you find that the evil tempers which now keep you mourning and humble, have almost melted away in the higher moral atmosphere into which you have ascended,—when you mark the difference between yourself and others, who began their Christian course at the same time, but neglected the same wise means to attain their end,—then, Grace, there may be a feeling in the depth of your heart, a suggestion

from within and from without, that you are not “an unprofitable servant,” that you have “done that which was commanded you.” This is the most dangerous point in the whole Christian course. This is the temptation which clings most closely to us, even to the end.

I think this explains to us why those whom we esteem the holiest are often more severely tried than others; afflictions being the means employed by the Great Physician of souls to keep their spirits low, and weak and humble. Such may be the treatment destined for you, Grace; nor do I, even while my eyes fill with tears at the thought of the bitter sorrows that may be necessary for your soul’s health, wish to avert one of them. I am assured that no pang will be inflicted upon any child of God which is not essential to the formation of his or her Christian character; and short-sighted indeed is that love which would wish to withhold the bitterest medicine from a patient whose “sickness” would otherwise be “unto death.” I cannot pray for your exemption from temporal sufferings, when I know that they may be essential to your eternal welfare.

Grace. I read somewhere, Cecilia, that “many blessings are prayed away.” I feel how

true this may be, but does it not almost make one shrink from intercessory prayer, when we think what sorrow we may bring down on our dear friends by earnest prayer for their welfare?

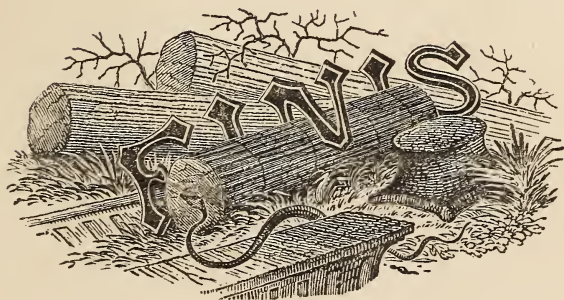
Cecilia. I have no doubt that such is often the case, for sorrow is frequently the only means by which our prayers for their welfare can be fulfilled. With respect, however, to being deterred from intercessory prayer by any consideration of the kind you mention, let us only reflect, that sorrows *must* come,—must come to all; the only difference is, that they carry messages of mercy and are the means of “growth in grace” to some, whilst to others they are messengers of wrath and means of hardening the heart. The sorrows which are sent in answer to prayer must always be of the former sort, and have been truly called blessings in disguise. We only see the dark side of the cloud, but the angels in heaven are looking upon its brightness, which is for a time turned away from us. It is my trust, dear Grace, that in answer to the prayers of the many to whom, by perseverance in your present habits, you will have an opportunity of being kind and useful, afflictions will be sent

to you whenever you require them. When any high thoughts of your own powers, any insinuations of self-righteousness, threaten to impair the simplicity of your trust in the Saviour and in his righteousness alone for acceptance with God, may sorrows come to you then, and may they prove, as they have to many of your fellow-pilgrims, the most precious of all the gifts that have been bestowed upon you! I shall still maintain an intercourse with you, though I fear it may not soon again be of the same intimate and confidential nature as that which has drawn us more closely together during the past week, than during the whole of our previous acquaintance.

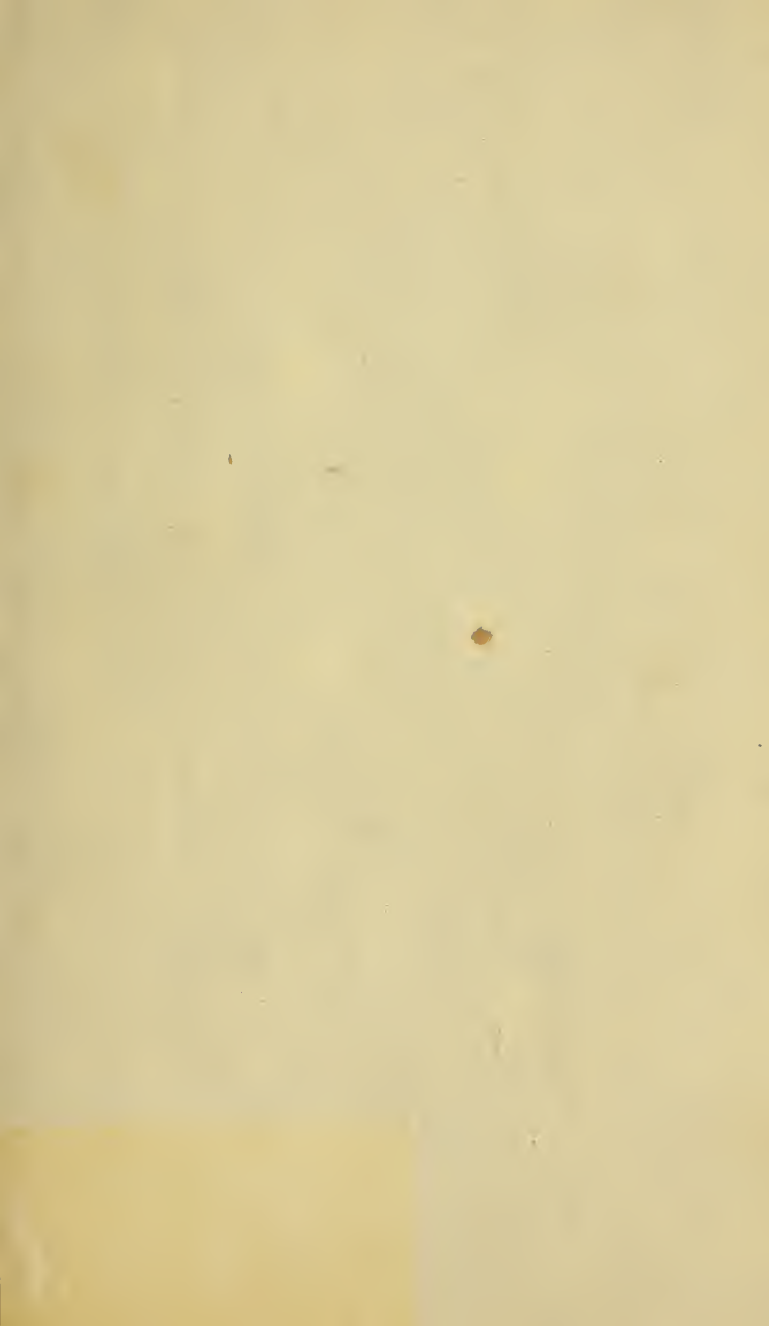
Grace. Dear Cecilia, how can I in any way show my gratitude for the self-knowledge, for the hopes of self-control which I have gained from your instruction?

Cecilia. By showing to others kindness of the same nature as that for which you feel grateful to me; but most of all by perseverance in that system of self-improvement, which opens before you a happy and a useful future. I have indeed confidence in your humility, in your self-distrust, in your earnestly inquiring spirit, that the course so well begun will be

steadily and faithfully pursued. Yes, dear Grace, I have a well-founded hope that such will be the case, and that the Christian heroism of a whole life will correspond with the efforts and aspirations of **THE HEROINE OF A WEEK.**







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